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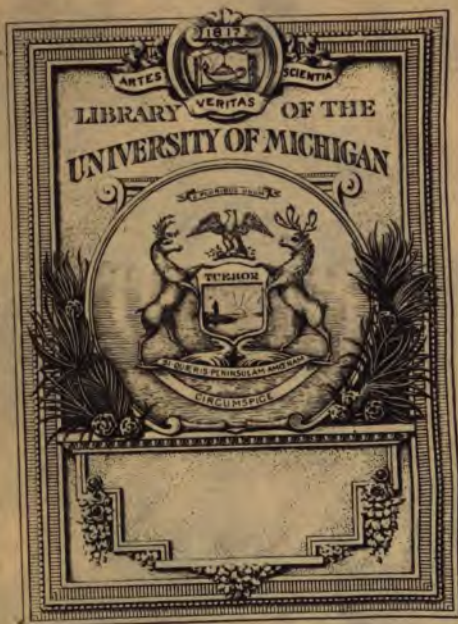
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EXTRACTS FROM THE
LETTERS OF AUGUSTE COMTE

J. K. INGRAM



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PASSAGES

FROM

THE LETTERS OF AUGUSTE COMTE

PASSAGES

FROM THE

LETTERS OF AUGUSTE COMTE

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED

BY

JOHN K. INGRAM, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGION"



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PREFACE.

THE Letters of Auguste Comte from which the extracts in the present volume have been taken are contained, with the exception of those to Drs. Audiffrent and Allman, in the following books:—

Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Richard Congreve. 1889.

Auguste Comte: Lettres à des Positivistes anglais. 1889.

Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Henry Edger et à M. John Metcalf. 1889.

Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Henry Dix Hutton. 1890.

Sept Lettres d'Auguste Comte à Antoine Étex. 1895.

The Letters to Mrs. Austin have appeared in the *Revue Occidentale*. I am indebted to Dr. Audiffrent for those addressed to him, he having kindly communicated to me, some years since, a manuscript copy of them, of which I then made a transcript. Those to M. Sabatier are given in the appendix to Dr. Audiffrent's "Lettre à M. Miguel Lemos," 1887. Dr. Allman copied for me the letter to him from which I have printed a passage.

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In selecting the extracts for translation, the necessary limitation of my task has compelled me to omit with regret much that is, for various reasons, important. Many passages which do not appear in this volume are of great biographical and historical interest, as referring to incidents of Comte's career, or to his daily habits, or as exhibiting his relations with persons more or less remarkable as early friends or enemies of Positivism ; many, too, contain valuable intellectual instruction and moral counsel. It would have been desirable, could I have undertaken the work, to translate in their entirety all the letters of Comte's later period, or, as he himself called it, his "second life." But, as this was not possible for me, I have sought to present to my readers such passages as seemed to express most clearly his final conceptions respecting the Religion of Humanity, or to contain the most striking and impressive precepts and suggestions for the guidance of conduct at all times and particularly now. His testamentary Executors are preparing for publication all his letters, so far as they are at present available,* and doubtless, when this work appears, some of his English

* See *Note* at the end of the present volume. The Letters to M. Valat and to J. S. Mill, which have already been published, will not be contained in the forthcoming collection.

disciples will produce a translation of the whole. In the meantime it is my hope that the present extracts will assist the public in forming a just appreciation of Comte's personal nature, and will contribute to the edification of serious minds.

All these extracts either bear on "doctrine" or convey "reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness." The regulation of feeling, and, through it, of the whole life, was the object which Comte kept perpetually before him. J. S. Mill said of him that he was a "morality-intoxicated man," and there is a substantial truth under this not very happily chosen epithet. Moral excellence, by which Comte understood the habitual subordination of egoism to altruism, and the self-dedication of the individual to the service of Humanity, was the direct or ultimate aim of all his efforts, whether for his own discipline or for the guidance of others. For the full attainment of this end he regarded intellectual enlightenment as indispensable, and it was chiefly on that ground that he valued it so highly. He never, indeed, overlooked the importance of such knowledge as directs human action on the material world ; but it was principally as being—when rightly constituted and co-ordinated—the handmaid of true Religion, that he held Science in esteem. "All the

Sciences," he says, in a passage in which he is not concerned with their industrial utility, "have value only as preparing the study of human nature ; even this can be truly systematised only by connecting it with its practical destination for the improvement of man ; everything else is vanity."*

It is to be remembered that Comte filled two offices, connected but distinct ; he was the Founder of the Religion of Humanity, and also the first High-priest of that Religion. His premature death deprived us of two treatises which he regarded as "a necessary complement" of his work in the former capacity : but, deeply as this loss, especially that of the treatise on Morals, is to be deplored, he considered the construction of the Positive Religion as essentially accomplished, and the treatises referred to would have been developments rather than fresh creations. Had he lived to publish these, and one or two projected minor writings, he would have devoted himself altogether for the remainder of his life to the sacerdotal work of governing the Church, preaching, advising on public questions, administering the Positive Sacraments, and directing individual souls. There is in his letters much to indicate how the task of spiritual direction

* See Letter to G. Audiffrent of 29th January, 1857.

would have been discharged—how he would have laboured to develop the influences of Religion on the hearts and lives of his individual disciples, guiding their progress, correcting their errors, censuring their deviations, and awakening their sense of duty, in modes adapted to their respective natures and circumstances. This kind of action, indeed, he already exercised, and some examples of it will be found in the extracts I now publish, though I have sought rather to present such passages as contain instruction for the collective body of his followers, and throw light on his doctrine and policy as a whole. When his entire correspondence has been given to the world, the two offices of which I have spoken, and in particular the second, will be more fully understood.

All the present extracts are from the Letters of Comte's later period. He led two successive lives—one extending from the date of his early Essays (1819-28) to the completion of the *Positive Philosophy* in 1842; the other occupying the interval till his death in 1857. The work of his first life was the systematisation of Science and the construction of his Philosophy; in his second, he worked out the ultimate purpose of his previous labours by the foundation of his Religion. The dawn of his second

life may be seen in the letters addressed to Mrs. Austin, from which the earliest extracts in the present volume are taken. During almost the whole of this final period (1845-57) he was under the influence of Mme. de Vaux, which, during the single year of their objective communion, regenerated his moral nature, and, after her death, not only developed more fully the beautiful and noble features of his character, but inspired some of his finest philosophical and religious conceptions. She presented an admirable type of the action—at once sanctifying and inspiring—which woman has always in a greater or less degree exerted on man, and which will be more completely exercised in the normal life of the future; and the names of Auguste Comte and Clotilde de Vaux will be for ever inseparably associated in the memory of a grateful posterity.

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TO MRS. AUSTIN.*

4th March, 1844.

THE important explanation given in your letter of yesterday furnishes me with a happy occasion for clearing myself of a charge which would distress me much, and which I believe I have never deserved, namely, the imputation of a tendency to an insufficient appreciation of the worth of women in general and your worth in particular. Though I am deeply convinced that the social office of your sex must remain essentially distinct from that of ours, in order to the happiness of both, I yet think I have rendered to the moral and even the intellectual qualities which belong to women an exact fundamental justice, which will naturally be more explicit in the great special treatise on social philosophy which I am to commence this year. The general condition of women in modern society, in unison with their organic characteristics, renders them in many respects well adapted for appreciating aright a real philosophical renovation, so that we ought to be very distrustful of a system of philosophy, especially social philosophy,

* Well known in Literature, especially by her translation of Ranke's "History of the Popes."

which did not obtain from women a profound sympathy. Without going farther back than to our great Descartes, I shall never forget that, notwithstanding the abstract and austere nature of his principal conceptions, which took social questions too little into account, women were the first to understand and protect him, which was a happy result of their situation, at once more impartial and freer from philosophical prejudices. Perhaps I ought not to count the celebrated Christina among those generous patronesses, her action being probably determined by her position as Queen; but no question can be raised as to the constant and disinterested zeal of the amiable Princess Palatine, who from the beginning thoroughly appreciated the great mental revolution to which Descartes set his seal. As to myself, Madam, I venture to affirm that of about fifty persons in Europe, whose profound sympathy I have for twenty years aimed at obtaining as the principal guarantee and the noblest recompense of my philosophic labours, I have always thought that there would be a large proportion of women. But, apart from this general avowal, I must express to you with gratitude how much I feel honoured and touched by the decisive approval you have in the main accorded to me, notwithstanding inevitable differences of opinion. Though I have not had the satisfaction of conversing with you as much as I should have wished, I hope that you will give me credit for sufficient taste and

discernment to have already appreciated your eminent worth, intellectual and moral. I have not failed to thank our dear John Mill with my usual sincerity for having procured for me such happy relations as those which have resulted from the noble and cordial exchange of thoughts and feelings with you and your worthy husband.* Though my life is a very solitary one, I have had several opportunities of becoming acquainted with ladies distinguished by their intellectual ability; but you are hitherto, Madam, the only one in whom I have had the happiness of seeing moral delicacy united with mental elevation. Those in whom I have found sufficient real superiority to be above blue-stocking habits disappointed me by showing a deplorable tendency to the aberrations of the *femme libre*.

Permit me, Madam, to thank you heartily for the satisfaction you have given me of observing the happy union of two attributes which I regard as equally necessary, but which are at present almost always opposed to each other. This deplorable alternative between two sorts of errors, which are alike repugnant to me, would so naturally result from your present situation, that I must specially admire the gifted nature, which, without any trace of affectation, has kept equally aloof from both.

Accept, Madam, the very sincere assurance of my affectionate respect.

* John Austin, author of a standard treatise on Jurisprudence.

TO THE SAME.

4th April, 1844.

. . . I DEEPLY sympathise, Madam, with the melancholy situation in which you are now placed, and I feel that you must be absorbed by the affectionate tasks thus imposed on you, and which become you so well. You know that I appreciate the tenderness of your soul no less than the rare qualities of your intellect. But permit me to remonstrate against the injustice which has fallen from your pen with respect to the emotions by which you are agitated, of which you suppose me to be ignorant or disdainful. I too, believe me, can shed tears, not only of admiration but also of grief, especially in sympathy with others. As to prayer, it is really only a special form, in the old system, of ecstatic feelings or general aspirations, which will always have an indestructible basis in human nature, whatever change may be wrought in our mental habits. The longer I live, Madam, the more do I feel that Positive philosophers, obliged as they are to conceive Man as he is, and under all the modifications which belong to his entire existence, are the only ones who can render full justice to their adversaries or competitors, by whom they must not expect to be as equitably appreciated. The narrow ✓

habits resulting from religiosity* lead people to believe that the emotions and even the conceptions of our nature cannot exist apart from the costume which they wore during the childhood of human reason. Another unjust prejudice, arising from the same source, disposes men to regard the true philosophy as incapable of ever embracing things which its merely nascent development has not yet allowed it to formulate, especially as, to the disadvantages of this insufficient evolution, is added the absence of the corresponding institutions. But I strongly feel in myself that all the noble sentiments of love and elevation, which the theological philosophy directed in its own way, will find under other forms an at least equal sustenance in the new speculative regime. The systematic awakening of tender and generous sentiment does not belong exclusively to vague, arbitrary, and nebulous thoughts. The austere and methodical elaboration, to which I have devoted my life, for the purpose of organising a body of conceptions, without which no regeneration can any longer find a solid basis, has never hindered me from habitually feeling enthusiastic movements of universal love and disinterested contemplation, as well when living in familiar intercourse with my fellows as in the silent concentration of my philosophic nights. Now in these,

* At the time when this letter was written, Comte used the word *religion* as synonymous with *theology*. Later, he himself founded the Religion of Humanity.

without doubt, lies all that is real in the moral and mental situation represented or maintained by prayer, properly so-called, when we remove the theological wrappings which are not at all indispensable to it. Permit me then, dear lady, to offer a tender protest against your prejudices on this subject, and to announce to you that, when the time shall have arrived for developing suitably the character of the new philosophy in relation to feeling, judges so conscientious as you are will soon recognise that it fears comparison with the old system no more in this province than on the speculative side. God is in reality no more necessary for loving and weeping than for judging and thinking.

TO THE SAME.

5th September, 1844.

. . . I, TOO, have heard that the clouds of threatened war are decidedly disappearing, as I had all along foreseen, just as in 1840, when the chances of European disturbance were yet graver. The absence of any social doctrine will still for a long time permit the empty-headed agitators of our two countries to mislead temporarily the public mind; but, notwithstanding this deplorable influence, the men of sense in the two governments will have no trouble in main-

taining a peace which, though thus precarious, is as inevitable as it is indispensable, because the fundamental situation everywhere determines dispositions radically pacific, which prevail in spite of the worst inspirations.

TO THE SAME.

26th May, 1846.

. . . YOU at first shared, in a certain degree, the empirical prejudices of your friends the metaphysicians, on the pretended dryness inherent in the systematic preponderance of the true positive spirit.

My sad bereavement * will at least have served to make you appreciate more justly the real final character of the only philosophy which will at last reconcile radically the needs of the intellect and those of the heart, which have hitherto been lamentably antagonistic amongst the moderns.

The more thoroughly you become acquainted with the fundamental tendency of the new philosophy, the more clearly you will see how much it is in unison with the life of the affections, through its directly and frankly social spirit, whilst the religious† principle is,

* This refers to the death of Mme. Clotilde de Vaux, which took place on the 5th of April, 1846.

† At this period Comte still used the word 'religious' as equivalent to 'theological.'

at bottom, necessarily personal, and only artificially becomes sympathetic.

I feel the happy moral efficacy, in my own case, of this philosophy, which furnishes to me now the only consolation open to me in my melancholy situation, namely, that of the familiar and regular cultivation of my cherished memories. My noble and tender friend understood that the systematisation of the worship of woman was to form one of the chief social results of the new philosophy. It was just that this great attribute should be first realised in my private adoration of her who might have been, and wished to be, in one form or another, the worthy companion of all my remaining years.

[FROM MRS. AUSTIN.]

The following is an extract from the letter of Mrs. Austin, of which Comte quotes a part in the Preface to the *Politique Positive*, vol. I.

29th September, 1848.

DEAR MONSIEUR COMTE,—

I HAVE not had time to read your book* as I will read it. But I have been fascinated by some pages

* "Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme," 1848, which has been translated, by Dr. Bridges, under the title "General View of Positivism."

on my sex. On that subject there is no one comparable to you (*il n'y a que vous*). Others either give to woman a position essentially inferior, subordinated to the material wants of man, or seek to assign to her one essentially outside her nature and instincts. You alone know how to combine her moral and intellectual dignity as companion with her physically and morally dependent nature. Lastly, you understand *the conjugal tie*, which contains all this—submission and influence, purity and tenderness. You develop admirably that fine saying of Vauvenargues—“every great thought comes from the heart.” You derive morality from the affections. Finally, I thank you for having treated with contempt the opinion that private life has nothing to do with public life, a maxim which has been too long used to deceive and corrupt the nations. . . . You are well aware of my respectful friendship for you : accept this repeated assurance of it.]

TO RICHARD CONGREVE.

22 Bichat, 64 (23rd December, 1852).

. . . THE republican situation in France has not, in essence, undergone any change ; its present suspension is merely official. A tyrannical dictator has transformed himself into a ridiculous stage personage, the true *mamamouchi* of Molière.* He believes himself, and is believed, to have become inviolable and hereditary by the decision of the French peasantry, who might as well vote him a hundred years of life or exemption from gout. Human affairs are not regulated in accordance with such caprices ; the laws by which they are directed have, long since, for ever destroyed French royalty, in which all modern retrogression had come to be embodied. Its irrevocable abolition was really accomplished on the 10th of August, 1792, after having been announced by a century of growing putrefaction ; and this judgment of history has not been since repealed, notwithstanding official fictions, since none of the dictators who have followed has

* *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, Act IV., Sc. 5.

been hereditary or even inviolable, in spite of their legal pretensions. The parody now in course of performance is the most unreal and least durable of these monarchical illusions; accordingly, no one takes it seriously. Outside the official world, people cannot pronounce the word *Emperor* without laughing; this *empire* without victories is still more a subject for the *Charivari* than was previously our *mountain* without scaffolds. . . . This regime is too retrograde to suit the proletariat, especially of the cities; and too demagogic to please the rich, who fear that popularity may be courted at their expense. As to respect, how can it be felt for a power which has resulted from suffrages despicable for the most part by reason of mental and moral incompetence, and even despised, though, of course, each voter admires his own vote, whilst deploring the incapacity or unworthiness of the other voters? . . . Between *empire* and *demagogism* this personage himself had marked out the true *via media*, the republican dictatorship, if only it had become, in the hands of another chief, progressive instead of retrograde, by respecting the full liberty of exposition and discussion. The present domination, moreover, of itself suspends the profound differences between the several sorts of republicans, who are thus all united against oppression; and they are much more numerous now than under the Convention. The last four years have for ever destroyed the general favour which supported the

earlier retrogrades, by showing that the republic could prevail here without the guillotine, and that it could even take stronger measures for the maintenance of order than the monarchy, because it guaranteed progress. The present episode, therefore, cannot last longer than the time required to stimulate and rally the different influences which will concur in bringing it to an end, and, necessarily, a violent one. That event is too near to admit of Positivism intervening otherwise than by foreseeing it, however favourable to our political installation may be a situation which represents us as the only real republicans in a country where the revolution is condensed in the republic, as the counter-revolution is in monarchy. Now that demagogism issues in retrogradation, no one can maintain as republican the metaphysical doctrines which Positivism has always decidedly combated, namely, those of equality and of the sovereignty of the people, which are now found to lead to the *mamamouchi* system. We, who proclaim that social evolution is regulated by immutable laws independent of any will, human no less than divine—we become the only systematic defenders of the republic, to which the directing part of the population is becoming more and more attached. But our number is still so small, that we cannot at all guide the course of the next insurrection, which will therefore continue to depend on the empirical republicans, to whom we, as mere spectators, must leave alike its benefits and

its responsibilities, content to share the universal advantage of a liberty of exposition, of which I hope we shall worthily avail ourselves.

However, we can at present modify happily this new public movement by endeavouring to improve the empirical republicanism, so as to make it less anarchical, and therefore more acceptable. Especially I have advised the modification of the old motto (for which M. Bonaparte has substituted none, in spite of his memorable saying: "We destroy only what we replace")* by suppressing the mention of equality, a principle which always characterised the bad revolutionary spirit. If the republican flag reappears with no inscription but "Liberty and Fraternity," the middle classes will at once be reassured, and the effect of the change will be to eliminate such republicans as are really incapable of discipline—the *Reds* of London and Brussels, alone sufficiently behind our time to still hold by universal suffrage, when it has led to the rule of the *mamamouchi*. . . .

You will see that, far from being discouraged by the present state of affairs, shameful as it is, I regard it as the most favourable which has yet presented itself for the political advent of Positivism. This is now plainly the sole remaining resource of the French Revolution. . . .

* This celebrated saying does not seem to be really due to Louis Napoleon, though it occurs in a letter of his to General Piat. It is, with greatest probability, attributed to Danton.

TO THE SAME.

6 *Homer*, 65 (3rd February, 1853).

. . . THE formula, "Liberty and Fraternity," may very well suffice provisionally until the adoption of the final motto—"Order and Progress," which would not be properly appreciated at present. It should also be our policy to ratify the abolition of parliamentary rule and the definitive preponderance of the principle of a dictatorship under the right conditions. . . .

TO THE SAME.

7 *Homer*, 67 (4th February, 1855).

. . . IT is a strange project to seek the establishment of a normal situation, when all ideas are in a state of fluctuation. We must limit our action in foreign affairs to the maintenance of the *statu quo* until the internal anarchy is sufficiently dissipated. Though the Russian Empire must certainly be decomposed, it is not the business of powers subject to the same destiny to hasten the spontaneous accomplishment of the sociological law which tends to dissolve our monstrous nationalities. The Tsar, if he wished to

recriminate, might as well profess a desire to deliver the Provençals from the yoke of the Parisians, by representing as oppressive the pretended homogeneity which is officially proclaimed as existing between the Gascons and the Normans. . . .

TO THE SAME.

25 Moses, 68 (25th January, 1856).

. . . PERHAPS I have thought too well of your aristocracy in believing it capable of regenerating its policy before John Bull stormily shakes off the Anglican torpor. But one must be very shortsighted to be still under the official illusion that England is safe from the general agitation of the West, because she had her revolution a century before France. If this prejudice continues to exist among your political magnates, the proletarian Cromwell, who can alone save you, will appear only after horrible tempests. This is what I begin to fear, seeing that the political adventurers who have the lead in France since Mazarin are, everything considered, superior to the caste statesmen with whom England seems provided.

An important work is wanted, which might open the eyes of your official leaders before the end of the twelve or fifteen years of sufficient tranquillity on

which you can still reckon ; and it seems to me that by your nature and convictions you are fitted to produce it. I mean a *Positivist* History of the true English Revolution, in which it would be shown that the republican regeneration, which failed under Cromwell on account of the insufficiency of the doctrine and the unripeness of the situation, was really continued by the French Revolution, which is now about to bring it to completion under the universal religion. My philosophy of history is, I believe, so familiar to you that you could worthily execute this application of it, which might exercise a useful influence on the really advanced men of both countries. . . .

TO THE SAME.

24 St. Paul, 68 (12th June, 1856).

. . . IT is high time that true Positivists, awaking from their inertia, should rise to the mission which results from the existing situation of their doctrine in the midst of anarchists and retrogrades disputing the possession of power in the West. Their faith, now complete, enables them to offer decisive and coherent solutions on all questions of the past, the future, and even of the present, which can ever arise, whilst always exhibiting the character which I have

summed up in the formula—"Conciliatory in act, inflexible in principle."

To us, then, it belongs to seize everywhere the general direction of public opinion, never forgetting that presidency is marked by initiative, which is at present left to writers not less incapable than unworthy of spiritual ascendancy. We ought, even in France, to renounce any immediate pretensions to political power, which must finally be handed over to statesmen of our body by the free choice of governments, when they have been led to recognise that Positivism alone can overcome Communism. Thus purely spiritual for some dozen years, our intervention must be welcome to existing rulers as turning away men's minds from political agitation to the regeneration of opinions and manners, and disposing them to maintain those now in power, who cannot receive counsels respecting the future while they feel insecure in the possession of their present authority. The elevation and freedom of our attitude must also attract to us the respect and affection of the governed, who will soon see that we alone are capable of stating, examining, and solving the truly social questions which are incompatible with revolutionary struggles. Pure from temporal ambition, we shall soon have obtained the independence necessary for our spiritual ascendancy, which may greatly increase, even whilst we are still few in number, provided that our zeal and our union are on the level of our faith. . . . All that we really want is a greater liberty of oral

exposition, which, though not absolutely indispensable to us, would further our action ; and I believe we shall obtain it, if we develop aright our normal attitude. . . .

We ought specially to take up international questions, with respect to which our principles will be more readily accepted than in internal affairs. We may even hope for the adhesion of some governments to our treatment of this class of relations, which are the most troubled of all, and with which the Western Revolution began, when the political power of the Papacy had been reduced to a nullity. The disposition, which ought to characterise us, of attaining all our ends by modifying opinions and manners through conviction and persuasion will be particularly striking in the case of problems which, during five centuries, have been treated by violence, whether illegal or legal. In consequence of the recently-awakened sentiment of the need of consolidating and developing the ties between the several Western nations, such an appeal to public opinion has become specially opportune.

Hence it is that I have been led to place on the Western order of the day, for the installation of Positivist diplomacy, the peaceable restoration of Gibraltar to Spain. The British Positivists ought to call for this without waiting for a journalistic or parliamentary initiative, or for a Spanish claim. Prolonged for a century and a-half, this usurpation is no more excusable than that of Calais, which, though it lasted for two centuries, would not now find a single defender. Such

a question can be properly raised only by *British* Positivists,* in order to mark the free and peaceful character of the solution which is the only fitting one. The material sacrifice involved in this restitution being very slight, the moral benefit arising from such a reform would be the more appreciable, and would soon give rise to other more decisive but more difficult applications of our principles, especially in an appeal to the German public to bring to an end the oppression of Italy by Austria. In morals, as in logic, important maxims should be first introduced in easy cases. . . .

TO THE SAME.

13 Des Cartes, 68 (19th October, 1856).

. . . WE may well be surprised that, with a doctrine so complete, Positivists exercise so little influence in an environment which is without real strength, and resists them only by its inertia.

The cause of this lies chiefly in the insufficiency of their union and their devotedness, arising from their old revolutionary habits of distrust and insubordination, which dispose each of them to isolate himself from the others, and even from their head. . . .

* It was raised by Dr. Congreve in his "Gibraltar, or the Foreign Policy of England," published in 1856.

The ambitious persons who would wish to use Positivism for their own political advancement will soon be drawn beyond their first intentions by the necessity of becoming religious in order to exercise any real social action. Until the tendency to replace God by Humanity explicitly shows itself, Anglicanism as well as Catholicism will resist any impulses towards renovation, because they will continue to be anarchical in character. The Positive religion has alone reconciled Order and Progress, neither of which can at present be worked out without the other. If the Cromwellian attempt at regeneration failed, it was chiefly from its religious insufficiency, which was due to its premature appearance. In a situation in which all the conditions of human life are simultaneously troubled, nothing can be radically cured without a doctrine that will embrace everything.

It is matter for satisfaction that the Italian party of progress feel the inanity of revolutionary ideas and revolutionary leaders. This will lead them, I hope, to purify their cause by putting aside a chimerical and subversive unity, and concentrating their efforts on the attainment of a just independence. But they must make one step more, and not expect this result but from a spiritual reorganisation, renouncing material efforts, even official, which would only aggravate their position. Nothing is possible in Italy but by substituting the Parisian religion for the Roman; every other direction will be sterile, though this will encounter

special obstacles, particularly from the old Latin prejudices as to the *Eternal City*, which has irrevocably become, in relation to Paris, a provincial city. To liberate Lombardy, an appeal should be made to the German public against the continuation of the Austrian yoke, and Positivism alone is capable of making such an appeal.

TO THE SAME.

1 *Archimedes*, 69 (26th March, 1857).

. . . I am truly happy to receive the important announcement of your full and final acceptance of the great task which I have proposed to you, namely, that of devoting a noble volume to the sound appreciation of the true English Revolution, eternally admirable, though having failed of immediate success by reason of the unripeness of the time for its appearance. Cromwell and Milton, sociologically inseparable, are, together with Alfred, the three greatest men of England. It will be your office to appreciate aright their entire natures and influences, which have been shamefully neglected hitherto, especially among the English, notwithstanding the recent efforts of Carlyle, who is, however, merely a *littérateur*. Your volume will be

no less precious for France, where I shall take care to have it translated without delay, so as to enlighten our revolutionists on their best antecedent, which remained entirely unknown even to the principal thinkers of the eighteenth century, not excepting the incomparable Diderot. Do not fear to bring out in a strong light the superiority of the English republicans to ours, among whom Danton alone offers an imperfect miniature of Cromwell, whilst there is no figure corresponding to that of Milton. Establishing the intimate filiation between the two regenerative explosions, though separated by four generations of apparent discontinuity, you will re-awaken the noble sympathies which British workingmen felt at the beginning of the French crisis, on which the Anglican aristocracy made such determined warfare, with the single aim of preventing the development of this powerful union of sentiment, more felt amongst you than on our side. . . .

Though our religion is eminently feminine, it has hitherto remained too little known to the sex which will furnish its best support. This sacred assistance will be supplied, hereafter, chiefly by the women of Spain and Italy, but I am not surprised at its already showing itself among the best Englishwomen, who are specially disposed to appreciate the satisfaction offered by Positivism, in consequence of the wants which the heart feels under the aristocratic and Protestant regime. . . .

The study of my recent volume* will enable you to complete your emancipation by liberating yourself from science, properly so-called, as you have already been freed from metaphysics and theology, after having suitably utilised, according to their nature and destination, each of these three preparatory stages, the most modern of which differs from the true positive state, as the objective analysis from the subjective synthesis, as the absolute from the relative, and as causes from laws. . . .

The distrust and reserve, which your letter has so well described, on the part of English working men, are owing to two influences, one special, the other general; and ought not at all to discourage our efforts towards their conversion, which is perhaps more compatible with their prudent dispositions than with French turbulence and presumption. In the first place, your proletaires naturally suspect writers who proceed from the middle classes, because they have all been as much accomplices as aristocratic pens in the system of hypocritical repression which distinguishes the Anglican regime. And, further, John Bull feels better than his chiefs, whether volunteer or official, that the real universal regeneration must be elaborated, not in England but at Paris, which city he can justly accuse of failing to rise to its present social

* The first volume of the *Synthèse Subjective*, containing Comte's systematisation of Mathematics, published in November, 1856.

mission. Such is the double source of the obstinately passive, though by no means indifferent, attitude of the British working classes, since the diversion organised by the aristocracy checked their French sympathies. But they will certainly be once more brought into harmony with the general Western movement when an English proletaire shall have made known to them that Paris has now discovered the solution of the Western problem—a solution which will be better received by John Bull than the Jacobinism of our Revolution, or the vague Socialism which now prevails amongst us.

Now, this popular initiative will soon arise from the transatlantic part of the British medium. The best and least noisy portion of the Yankees is descended from the English republicans who emigrated to escape from the royalist reaction. This exceptional population has always kept alive its social aspirations, though it has not been able to manifest them except in the struggle for independence, the success of which was mainly due to them. Though they seem now-a-days entirely absorbed in industrial activity, they are waiting for the thorough solution promised by Cromwell and Milton, and out of their bosom will proceed the universal and decisive awakening of the British proletariat. . . .

*TO THE SAME.**I Cæsar, 69 (23rd April, 1857).*

... DIFFERENCE of religious beliefs does not prevent the woman who possesses the principal merit of her sex—namely, tenderness—from being regarded by a true Positivist as a spontaneous personification of Humanity. But this sentiment of reverential affection becomes more complete and more effective when a sincere conformity of convictions seconds the habitual development of the fundamental sympathy. . . . The encyclopedic education must, in the normal state of society, be common to all human souls of both sexes. . . . It ought now to be the aspiration of all worthy mothers to produce sons really capable of bringing the Western revolution to an end, and they ought therefore specially to feel the desire of fulfilling the conditions of self-education necessary to accomplish the sacred mission assigned to them by the Great Being in the training of the next generation. Besides, true feminine dignity must always be independent of the maternal office, of which many women are naturally deprived without thereby forfeiting their principal social destination, which is more relative to the husband than to the son. Our time even offers to women of exceptional gifts a mission more intimate

and more personal, though foreign to the ordinary functions of the sex, in what would be the most decisive apostolate for the installation of the only religion in which the loving sex is worthily appreciated. . . .

The more I compare the English Revolution with our own, the more I feel the radical superiority of the former. Neither the time nor the place, nor consequently the directing doctrine and the force employed, could be really suitable for the Western solution. But, notwithstanding its apparent, or, at least, immediate failure, the English republican explosion has proposed better than the French the entire modern problem. Being religious, while the latter was irreligious, it felt, as the other did not, that the Western Revolution could not be really closed but by a new religion, the true character of which could not be then appreciated. Since this solution has been irrevocably found, the French Revolution, rising from negative to positive, tends to become as elevated and more efficacious than its imperfect English precursor. The very prematurity, however, of the latter enabled it to produce types which will remain for ever incomparable.

Hoping to live long enough to inaugurate the Paris Pantheon, which I have already claimed as belonging to Positivism, I trust I shall finally have the profound satisfaction of accomplishing, as true High-priest of Humanity, in the presence of a fit audience represent-

ing all the West, the solemn apotheosis of Cromwell, Milton, and their energetic co-workers. Then, as being a Frenchman, I shall be better able to signalise the moral and political superiority of the English regenerators over ours, whose enthusiasm, and even whose convictions, were enfeebled by their characteristic scepticism when circumstances had so far changed as to weaken the initial impulse. Whilst Cromwell's warriors went to people America rather than bow beneath the yoke of royalty, the soldiers of Danton were soon engaged in the military orgy which was the worst stain on the French crisis; and a similar contrast is observable in comparing types taken from civil life.

When you come to form anew your theoretic education, you will without effort undergo the reaction which I have already indicated as the result of my late volume. The prestige of science at present impedes the progress of minds the most completely liberated from the theological, and even the metaphysical, yoke. Yet this final emancipation has become as indispensable as the two preceding ones for the installation of the Positive religion, whose principal adversaries, especially in France, will more and more seek a support in science, properly so called. Without a fitting theoretic preparation, which can alone surmount this last hindrance, the new priesthood cannot sufficiently realise the admirable sentence of Pope ("The proper

study of mankind is Man”), which will be the motto of my next volume, as it was of the treatise of Cabanis.* But after having fully realised Bacon’s wish for the construction of a “ladder for the understanding” (*scala intellectus*), we shall convince the public that a ladder cannot be a home, and that human reason can establish itself firmly only on the highest level gradually reached through the successive stages of objective research. True positivity in our speculations can only result from a close combination of reality with utility, and the latter cannot be fully judged without a complete synthesis, which is necessarily subjective. Whoever really understands the law of the three states, must always regard its principal application as relative to religion, which, having finally become Positive, dissipates the preponderance previously accorded to its different scientific preambles. . . .

TO THE SAME.

15 Charlemagne, 69 (2nd July, 1857).

. . . COMPETENT theoretic minds, now placed at the true social point of view, instead of dwelling too much on intellectual differences, should recognise the truth at which the best practical men of all times

* “*Les Rapports du physique et du moral de l’homme.*”

have arrived—namely, that always, and it may be added, now more than ever, there are at bottom only two real parties—that of order and that of disorder ; conservatives and revolutionists ; those who sincerely wish to end the Western anarchy, and those who, under pretence of progress, secretly aspire to perpetuate the state of nongovernment, especially spiritual. Our principal present mission is to form and direct in the West the true party of order, which hitherto has neither head nor tail, since it is simultaneously attacked by the literary men and the proletaires. The agitators of the several Western nations act more in unison than the peace-makers, the latter being everywhere without principles or guides, which Positivism can alone supply them with. In this noble final attitude, I feel myself more in sympathy with M. Bonaparte or even with Monsieur Henri V., or any other of those who maintain material order in the midst of spiritual disorder, than with my pretended auxiliaries, Mill, Littré, Lewes, etc., whatever be the dose of Positivist theorems they can sincerely admit, whilst the others are ignorant of them ; from my youth up, I have always preferred the Government to *the Opposition*.

TO ANTOINE ÉTEX.*

(February, 1853).

. . . I AM not surprised that your defection from Positivism throws you back into the religion in which you were brought up, and which, notwithstanding its irreparable exhaustion, remains morally superior to all the other doctrines now accredited. All those who find themselves incapable of taking a place in the very small number of the true regenerators, ought to bring their fluctuations to an end in the same way. But I rather desire than expect that you will again become sincerely Catholic. Frequent accesses of Voltairianism will, I fear, disturb the tranquillity you seek ; from time to time your reason will revolt against the particular dogmas which compose an indivisible belief, the general economy of which has been long universally misconceived, even by its best partisans. No one can retrograde at will, any more than advance at will. Most of those who now, without being competent for the task, treat social

* M. Étex was a distinguished artist. He was born in 1808 ; died in 1888.

questions, if they cease to be purely revolutionary, fall irrevocably into the *parliamentary* state, in which they combine anarchy and retrogression in the hope of obtaining truth, according to the eclectic method, by the reciprocal neutralisation of errors.

Neither calm nor dignity is any longer possible for the heart and intellect of the Westerns of our day, save in the bosom of Positivism, which, whilst devoting us to Humanity, directs us to pay fitting honour to your God, as well as to the divinities which preceded him, as spontaneous institutions which She developed to guide Her childhood, though they have now become incapable of acceptance by Her maturity.

TO HENRY DIX HUTTON.

9 *Frederic*, 65 (13th November, 1853).

. . . WHATEVER may be the intellectual and moral disadvantages of the legal profession, its practice, when it is honest, certainly offers one great advantage—that of affording the opportunity of acquiring a real, though empirical, knowledge of human nature, which is not always thus shown on its bad side. No other profession can now in the same degree fulfil this precious condition, since the decadence of the official priesthood deprives it of the public and private relations which once secured its superiority in this respect. . . .

A mere theorician may often confine himself to the intellectual adoption of the new philosophy, as but too many examples show. But a true practician, who is in contact with the business of life, cannot be content to remain long in this incomplete and barren situation, and finds no rest till he rises from the philosophic basis to the religious construction, which is alone socially decisive. It is for these reasons that, in the past, the lawyers showed themselves in general superior to

the metaphysicians, though the two classes received the same education. . . .

I am glad to learn that a writer so distinguished as Mr. Carlyle is engaged on a life of the great Frederic, who has hitherto wanted a worthy historian. My last volume will perhaps be useful to him in this important work, by supplying the true theory of the century of which this dictator was the best representative. Though I have not read anything of Mr. Carlyle's, I know that he has nobly done justice to the memory of your great Cromwell, and that prejudices in favour of parliamentarism do not obfuscate his social views.

On Sunday last I received the new book* compiled by Mr. Lewes for the propagation of the Positive philosophy. After a rapid but attentive reading I am much dissatisfied with it, and have stated my opinion in a reply to the writer, whose exposition is very insufficient, and, as you say, often unfaithful. The volume seems to me to have been composed in haste, to get the start of Miss Martineau's publication, which, I feel sure, will be much more satisfactory, and, particularly, more conscientious. It is to be regretted that the *Positivist Catechism* has not been translated into English;† that would best meet the general interest of your public in Positivism by supplying a complete,

* "Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences," by G. H. Lewes, 1853.

† It was translated by Dr. Congreve in 1858.

though summary, exposition of it. I have specially blamed Mr. Lewes for his unexpected participation in the system of hypocrisy which the Deists are trying to substitute for those of the different Christian bodies, and which seems to me more contemptible than any other.

TO THE SAME.

25 Bichat, 65 (27th December, 1853).

. . . YOUR careful appreciation of the hindrances which Positivism will long experience in your country appears to me very satisfactory. However, I think the system of hypocrisy, which is the principal source of these obstacles, is already regarded by your most advanced statesmen as essentially exhausted. A decisive visit which I received last winter from an eminent baronet* who has become one of my largest subscribers, has proved to me that British Conservatives begin to feel the necessity of regenerating their stationary policy. After having made war on France, sixty years ago, to prevent the propagation of Jacobinism in England, your Aristocracy now regard peace as the fundamental condition of their government. They

* The "baronet," really a knight, was Sir Erskine Perry, who published an account of the interview in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1877.

have thus practically resigned themselves to the infiltration of Socialism, or Communism, though they employ powerful material resources for the purpose of retarding the international contagion. They cannot, therefore, be slow to recognise Positivism as the only doctrine that can overcome subversive utopias, Anglicanism having become, no less than Catholicism, incapable of offering them effective resistance. The political personage above mentioned tells me that this conviction, which he himself entertains, is making its way into the British Cabinet, which already contains one incomplete Positivist (Sir W. Molesworth).

The political sagacity of your Aristocracy leads me to hope that they will modify their conduct in time to avoid a popular commotion, which in your country would be more stormy than elsewhere. As this crisis cannot arise with you for ten or twelve years, such a transformation could now be wrought in a sufficiently mature manner. Your Lords might remain at the head of British society, renouncing the Anglican hypocrisy, and becoming industrial patricians. In all other Western countries, the new temporal power cannot possibly emanate from the old ruling classes. Spain, however, appears to me to admit of a similar, though less probable, exception on the spiritual side. It is the only country in which it appears to me that the Catholic clerical order might be sufficiently regenerated to transform itself into a Positivist priesthood. However, my personal relations are not yet sufficient to

enable me to count on this great renovation with as much confidence as on that of your Aristocracy. . . .

The slowness of the propagation of Positivism in France arises chiefly from the fact that it has not yet reached its normal medium. Our contacts have at first been with the Revolutionists, who, saving some eminent exceptions, are sure to repel the Positive philosophy and religion, as opposed at once to their anarchical ambition and their belated metaphysics. It is amongst the Conservatives that they will really have a favourable reception, from their exclusive aptitude to guarantee social order, domestic and political, against the subversion threatened by demagogism. But hitherto the Conservatives oppose Positivism because, from the nature of our first contacts, they regard us as a new sect of revolutionists. This gross mistake cannot, however, fail to be dissipated in proportion as the Positive religion is more developed and better known. The attacks with which the revolutionists increasingly honour us will the sooner bring about a decisive rectification of these ideas ; and then Positivism will speedily gain ascendancy. When the approaching return of freedom of exposition and discussion shall have given a free course to anarchical tendencies, all enlightened and sincere friends of order will rally round the Positivist group, which, if it shows zeal and talent enough, must in ten years become master of the situation. . . .

To direct your scientific studies, I may point to

three incomparable works which you may view as supplying a *résumé* of them, and which you may use to test their efficacy—namely, Lagrange's *Theory of Functions*, Berthollet's *Chemical Statics*, and Bichat's *General Anatomy*.* Whoever has really assimilated these three masterpieces of scientific genius may regard himself as having acquired a thorough knowledge of natural philosophy, and as thus qualified to apply himself to moral and social philosophy. But such is the present degradation of the scientific spirit that I am probably the only person who can boast of having adequately fulfilled this fundamental condition, which must hereafter become familiar to all true philosophers.

TO THE SAME.

7 Moses, 66 (7th January, 1854).

. . . I HAVE written to my eminent auxiliary, Miss Martineau, to express the gratitude and satisfaction with which I regard her unexampled work,† in which conscientiousness and talent are admirably combined. I had, however, read only her

* Elsewhere he speaks of Berthollet as "the only thinker Chemistry possesses," and of Bichat as "the most eminent of biological thinkers."

† "The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau," 1853.

noble preface and the excellent table of contents, with a few decisive articles, and I shall probably not read more. But that was sufficient to enable me fully to appreciate the high merits of this publication, in which I have already recommended that most readers should study my fundamental treatise, which need not for the future be read in the original, except by theoreticians properly so called. I presume that this *condensation* will be translated into the other Western languages, and perhaps even into French. This would complete the immense service which her work must render to the propagation of Positivism.

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The public of our day in general admit that all religious opinions ought to be respected in proportion to their moral and social efficacy ; and we can maintain in our discourses and by our acts a successful competition with theologians of all kinds. But true Positivists must also feel, in spite of their surviving revolutionary prejudices, how much we ought to prefer in our adversaries sincere, though retrograde, beliefs to Voltairian scepticism, even as a preparation for our doctrine. By suitably combining these two tendencies, I believe our British brethren will be able to obtain tolerance and even respect without disavowing their principles. It will suffice that they be always just towards the older religions, of which ours must regard itself as the general successor, reserving their active condemnation for purely revolutionary dispositions. For these no longer

retain their transient destination, whilst the several religions, not to speak of their necessity during a long past, still offer a certain aptitude for disciplining those who are unable to rise to better doctrines. . . .

TO THE SAME.

26 Homer, 66 (23rd February, 1854).

. . . As to your remarks on the principle of Positivist reprobation, they seem to indicate some remains of the metaphysical fatalism now often met in the best minds, which have not yet sufficiently formed the habit of recognising natural laws, especially those affecting the higher phenomena. People are inclined to neglect the important degree of influence each man can exert in modifying his conduct, which, they think, is sufficiently explained by his situation and his organisation, adding to these his education. But you will soon perceive that Positivism excludes absolute fatality, though it asserts modifiable fatality. Every one certainly remains responsible for his ordinary conduct, after we have deducted all the influences superior to his own. Thus, reprobation is as much justified as approbation, though it ought to be less practised as tending to spoil our feelings. I have made an extremely sober use of it in the *Positivist*

Calendar, where I have limited its duration, and confined it to two decisive cases. With respect to one of those, that of Bonaparte,* the strictest justice calls for such a condemnation on the ground of his abominable abuse of his exceptional power, though I have finally fixed on the French public, rather than on him, the principal responsibility for his *first* aberrations.

TO THE SAME.

12 Cæsar, 66 (4th May, 1854).

. . . I AGREE with you in the belief that we must at present expect fluctuations or decline of zeal on the part of those whose conversion to Positivism is not extended to the religious conclusion. These incomplete adhesions may always be compromised by the slightest divergence, which is sufficient to neutralize great convergences when veneration does not institute a real discipline. The number of those who will now become Positivists in a serious sense is so small (though their ascendancy would suffice to guide a decomposed society) that we may always fear disappointment in any case, so long as the plenitude and stability of convictions have not been tested. . . .

* The other case was that of the Emperor Julian. Comte afterwards abandoned the proposal of public reprobation here referred to.

What you say as to the non-emancipation of the British public does not surprise me, nor does it cause me any anxiety as an obstacle to the ascendancy of Positivism, since the ruling classes are sufficiently free. A sceptical state amongst the masses is far from being a condition favourable to their regeneration. That preamble suited only the central nation, charged with the Western initiative, which, without such a previous stage, the free thinkers could not have developed. Everywhere else the breaking down of the established discipline is inimical to reconstruction by encouraging anarchical tendencies, which are not less hostile to the new order than to the old, as is shown, even in France, by the growing aversion which the revolutionists feel for Positivism, though it could not have arisen without the destructive movement. But, just for that reason, I believe that the Catholic masses in Spain and Italy are still better disposed than your Protestant population to undergo the action of Positivism ; for, amongst you, the anarchical principle, though checked by the transitional policy which has been followed, is everywhere infiltrated through individual examination of the biblical beliefs. . . .

Your difficulties as to personal worship arise from a twofold confusion which is very natural with respect to so new a province of things.

In the first place, you take too little account of the principal transformation which characterises Positivism, in which the relative always takes the place of

the absolute. Theologism, especially in its monotheistic form, has led to the formation of habits which must be changed in order to institute the final worship ; it has developed the taste for absolute perfection, which disposes to a disdain of the real affections as unworthy of such a contrast. But in the Positive state, it is sufficient that the adored being, without being considered perfect, should be really superior to us, even though this superiority should be only partial, especially if it concerns the heart, as in the ordinary case of feminine types, who are the principal objects of personal worship.

In the second place, you have not clearly perceived that the question is not as to public adoration, but only as to private homage. This is addressed to types perfectly known by the worshipper, though ill appreciated by others. In such a case death is not indispensable to permit a sufficient idealisation, for which objective types, though less pure and less fixed, offer the advantage of livelier and more varied impressions. Since worship is principally intended to develop our sympathetic instincts, it is important to give it all the extension of which it is capable, instead of restricting it to the most pronounced cases. Whilst making us better, it improves the beings who are its objects ; and this furnishes an additional motive for extending it to the living, when the due conditions are fulfilled. In public life, one can seldom be judged before his death, because what remains of his exist-

ence may turn out more worthy of blame than the earlier portion was deserving of praise ; theoreticians are almost the only persons who can receive an objective glorification in view of the greatness of their services. But private life admits of another sort of appreciation after a sufficient duration of intimate relations, which have to do rather with feelings than with acts, whilst acts can alone, in general, be judged by the public. Never will a son be hindered from adoring his mother, or a lover his beloved, because they see in them qualities overlooked by indifferent persons, and which, besides, are developed only in conditions of intimacy.

Positivism sanctions and cultivates these natural dispositions, which were repelled by Theologism. My next volume * will explain the final incorporation of Fetishism in our religion. Our maturity, sanctioning the tendencies of our childhood, will sympathise even with the material world, honouring materials at the same time as it adores products. With still stronger reason we ought to push as far as adoration, our respect and gratitude for living beings, provided they offer a true superiority, without waiting till death has idealised them. In a word, adoration, which for the Theologists was an obligation, becomes for the Positivist a means of moral improvement, to which he ought to resort in as great a degree as possible.

* The first volume—the only one published—of the *Synthèse Subjective*.

TO THE SAME.

12 *Saint Paul*, 66 (1st June, 1854).

. . . MIXED marriages are one of the essential privileges of Positivism. Incompatible with absolute religions, which in sincere believers are mutually exclusive, they are suitable to the relative religion which is the normal issue of all the others. They will be frequent in the early future, so as to promote the universal advent of the final faith. When Positivists have arrived at the number of a thousand in the whole West, they will be in a position to marry only among themselves, from the nature of the conjugal conditions which they establish, facilitated by the general development of human contacts. But, even then, they will often be led to choose wives outside of their own body.

In this case, which now is the commoner one, the rule to be observed is that of requiring an entire reciprocity. Provided that the wife consents to the Positivist ceremony, the husband can, and ought to, accept the Catholic, Protestant, Mussulman, &c., celebration. It is plain that no one ought to lie, and consequently this concession must be on the footing simply of a condescension, whether in favour of the woman, or as a mark of respect for one of the preparatory religions, without involving any active

adhesion. If the wife accepts this compact, the husband may reasonably hope to convert her afterwards, especially through the familiar spectacle of the moral superiority which must soon become the essential character of the Positive religion. But if the woman refused this compliance, the union would be a very hazardous one, the wife thus betraying either an insufficient confidence in the husband's superior competence, or a secret project of bringing him back to the old faith. Christianity and Islamism both prevailed by a veritable revolution, and therefore the commonplace reproach of renouncing the faith of our fathers cannot be seriously urged by any one, since that was precisely what was once done by those whom the adherents of the respective creeds most revere. Any such pretension really only hides the hope or the project of bringing back a lost member to his earlier religion without being able to defend that religion directly.* . . .

. . . Accept my cordial thanks for your worthy appreciation of "the noble lady, whose memory all my true disciples cherish and revere." This touching

* He says elsewhere, with respect to the effect of mixed marriages on the education of the children—"I congratulate you on having taken the right view that the feminine superintendence of the education of all children ought to be maintained, notwithstanding an imperfect conversion of the mother or even her irrevocable opposition to our faith, on the ground of the moral superiority of the loving sex, which is always efficacious in spite of the greatest intellectual imperfections; the reaction of these last on the children will soon be compensated by the contrary influence of the father or the social surroundings."

anticipation of the union which Posterity will recognise as existing between us constitutes now my best recompense. I am happy and proud to have already obtained such warm sympathies with my personal worship from select souls across the Channel, and even the Atlantic. . . .*

TO THE SAME.

5 Dante, 66 (20th July, 1854).

. . . THE destination of women being to form men, they must, like all authors, be judged by their works. But it would be unjust to hold them responsible for cases of failure, or even not to honour the tree independently of its fruit, if its own excellence can be sufficiently ascertained without that. Public worship will be able to glorify women, whose husbands or sons deserve no praise, when they have unmistakeably shown great qualities for a cultivation which has yet not been successful; though these cases present grave difficulties as regards the appreciation of such exceptional claims. . . .

I read every morning a chapter of the *Imitation*,

* See *Politique Positive*, iv., pp. 551-2, Invocation to Mme. de Vaux; and *Synthèse Subjective*, Preface, p. xi. The sentence here quoted from H. D. Hutton, is more fully given in a subsequent letter to him, dated 11 Charlemagne, 69 (28th June, 1857). It ended with the words, "because she renewed the light of the intellect by the flame of the heart."

and every evening a canto of the *Divina Commedia*.
I have done so now for more than seven years
without ever tiring of them.

TO THE SAME.

27 Frederic, 66 (1st December, 1854).

. . . POSITIVISTS, destined—as they are—to direct the world of our time, some by counsel, others by command, cannot fulfil their mission aright without a constant feeling of their mental and moral superiority. But at the same time, this necessary conviction must not affect their kindly appreciation of the individuals and classes which now oscillate empirically between retrogradation and anarchy. It may not be easy to reconcile these feelings, but it is quite practicable in any one who is sufficiently penetrated with the relative spirit and the sympathetic character which belong to Positivism. We must utilise, without despising, all the dispositions of our contemporaries, regarding the new religion as coming to satisfy and harmonise the different aspirations which are now at war with one another. . . .

TO THE SAME.

12 Moses, 67 (12th January, 1855).

. . . . WHEN you express a preference for a *decisive* war as compared with an armed peace, you forget

that nothing decisive is possible when principles are in such a state of fluctuation as at present. What the existing condition of things prescribes is to limit active intervention to the utmost, since there is a general ignorance of the laws of the phenomena which it is sought to modify. Positivists, who know these laws better than "statesmen," must at present advise, as the prevailing rule, the maintenance of the *statu quo* in international relations. . . .

We should be ready and willing to submit to the general law,* which, when we have committed an error, always connects with it some punishment, which is only aggravated by obstinacy in vainly attempting to escape it. . . .

Scientific habits lead us to see that it is by solitary meditation we arrive at truth. Controversy never serves that end, even with respect to the simplest questions. . . .

Of the five dictators which have hitherto ruled us since Danton, British admiration has fallen on the lowest and the most mischievous, the contemptible Louis-Philippe.

If the revolutionary state in practical men consists in every one seeking to command, whilst no one is willing to obey, in speculative men it takes another form, no less disastrous, and more universal, every

* He speaks elsewhere of "the moral profit and even the true dignity arising from the direct and complete avowal of any wrongdoing."

one claiming to teach, and no one being willing to learn. The desire of attaining fixed convictions by mere power of intellect without any participation of the heart, is a pure illusion of the proud metaphysical spirit. If you made it a rule to read the *Imitation* daily, you would recognise this, and would thus gain more, intellectually and morally, than by an endless perusal of journals, reviews, or pamphlets. Without veneration we can learn nothing, nor appreciate anything, nor, above all, attain any fixed state of mind any more than of heart, not only in morals or sociology, but even in geometry or arithmetic.

You perhaps suppose that you are sufficiently amenable to discipline when you admit a notion after you have heard and understood the proof of it. But in that you deserve no credit for submission, for you cannot help it, being forced by the intellectual laws which dominate you. Faith begins only when you have to do with notions which seem to you doubtful, and which you accept on trust, giving them as much weight as to those of which you have got a proof; as every one does who is not a victim of the revolutionary malady. As to notions which appear to you inadmissible, you cannot use them so long as they shock your theoretic economy; but you owe to them a respectful silence, founded on the just superiority of your spiritual chief, who has probably seen as clearly as you, and even much sooner, the objections which have alarmed you. Such are the

elementary conditions of spiritual discipline ; they were commonly realised in the Middle Ages, but have been seriously compromised by Protestantism. No harmony is possible without them, since no one, not even a theorician, can ever appropriate the proofs of all the notion she must employ.

TO THE SAME.

21 Moses, 67 (21st January, 1855).

. . . POSITIVISM has fully systematised the tendency of the Middle Ages to make the heart responsible for the failures, as well as the successes, of the mind. But this conviction has not yet sufficiently influenced the habits of my best disciples, who often concede too much importance to the intellect. Striking examples, however, show that the most complete proofs do not secure a sufficient fixity, at least with respect to philosophic and social opinions, if the heart does not assist the mind. . . .

Veneration will alone enable you promptly and fully to appropriate notions which a vain discussion would render obscure and doubtful. It is really to an unnoticed survival of the habits contracted in the Middle Ages that the Westerns owe the happy assimilation of scientific doctrines which would never have passed into universal circulation if the present spirit of insubordination had existed all along. You

ought all the more to exercise an active and constant watchfulness over yourself in this particular, because the medium in which you live tends to encourage a sceptical empiricism (which does not at all preserve from credulity or illusion) in consequence of its three characteristic features—official Protestantism, the Parliamentary system, and national egoism.

This triple influence, already prominent in Venetian life, but especially developed in England, is also the essential source of the difficulties you find in the just appreciation of Louis XI. and the great Frederic, with respect to whom it is not so much documents that are wanting to you as the right point of view. The rehabilitation of the first in opposition to the prejudices and rancour of our aristocracy, dates already nearly a century back, having commenced with Duclos' work.* But it is chiefly to the historical impulse resulting from the French Revolution that we owe the rectification of the previous narrow view, the dictatorship of Danton having made us understand that of Louis XI. In the absence of British prejudices, you would experience no difficulty in appreciating aright, by means of any of the available sources, a type so strongly marked as that of Frederic, which offers the best realisation of Hobbes' confused wish for the alliance of dictatorship with liberty. Since Mr. Carlyle has justly appreciated Cromwell, I hope he will sufficiently disengage himself

* "*Histoire de Louis XI.*," 1745.

from national prejudices to understand the great man who is the most perfect impersonation of modern policy.

TO THE SAME.

7 *Archimedes*, 67 (1st April, 1855).

. . . THE Westerns ought to maintain the *statu quo* in Europe by a pacific but resolute attitude, instituting against any maritime oppression the permanent guarantee which would result from the *Occidental Marine* suggested in my Preliminary Discourse, to be formed by an entirely voluntary combination of all the Western States to organise the police of the seas throughout the human planet. . . .

The parliamentary regime, in the only country in which it has been fully developed, has led to a general system of distrust and irresponsibility, all action being placed in the hands of committees. Though the whole of the French past has radically preserved us from such a tendency, it would, perhaps, have prevailed, at least in official life, for some years, if the dictatorial crisis of 1851 had not fortunately prevented the systematic disorder which our revolutionary doctors projected for 1852, and by which they had already thrown the Polytechnic School into confusion (though there is no reason to regret what has befallen it).

The absence of real statesmen on which you observe

is only more complete in England than elsewhere, Protestantism and Nationalism having there specially narrowed ideas and feelings. But the same want is more or less common to all the countries of the West, as is also the mental and moral anarchy, which is everywhere favourable to the rise of mediocrities, and adverse to that of truly superior men. . . .

TO THE SAME.

Complementary Day of 67 (31st December, 1855).

. . . WHOEVER does not neglect the end in pursuing the means must see that the advent of a new spiritual power—that is to say, of a systematic priesthood—constitutes the only solution which can terminate the Occidental revolution. In the minor writings of my youth, I represented this reorganisation of the theoretic authority as the general object of my life; and the formation of a universal doctrine, first philosophical and afterwards religious, has never been anything but a necessary means to that end. Having now fulfilled this fundamental condition, I must proceed, with the assistance of all true Positivists, to constitute directly a priesthood which cannot always consist of myself alone, whatever antipathy its creation may inspire in literary men incapable of being admitted into it. If philosophy is barren when it does not become religious, religion remains insufficient without a suitable

clergy. The Positivist subsidy must now openly take this large and permanent destination, in place of being limited to my personal maintenance. . . .

Such is the point of view at which all Positivists who are seriously occupied with their social destination ought now to place themselves, surmounting secondary points of disagreement by the habitual consideration of the principal object. I can recognise as my true disciples only those who, renouncing the project of founding a synthesis of their own, regard that which I have constructed as essentially sufficient and radically preferable to any other. Their duty is to propagate and apply it, without aiming at criticising or even improving it. . . .

TO THE SAME.

1 Homer, 68 (29th January, 1856).

I CONGRATULATE you on having been led by a temporary aberration to feel that our own moral improvement is the principal business of each of us. This is especially true of Positivists, who, coming now to regulate human life, ought first to regulate their own. It is true that everyone seizes moral rules first in their application to others, which affords a point of view more general, and less troubled by personal impulses. But he must always end by applying to himself the

rule of conduct which he has recognised as just in the cases of others. With that begins the most decisive application of the plan of reformation, since a man can best modify himself ; and in this way we can most effectually convince others of the superiority of the regime which we wish to prevail everywhere. . . .

As to your direct question respecting faith, you are not yet at the proper point of view, since you seem to view as a burden, to be reduced as much as possible, what is really a blessing which it is desirable to develop. If you will read again my chapter* on the Positive Theory of Religion, it will show you that faith, coming between love and hope, is one of the three essential conditions of human happiness. In my little work† on the Spiritual Power, I established thirty years ago that the normal state of our intelligence consists not in discussing but in deciding ; or, in other words, in developing consequences instead of examining principles. Unhappily faith lost is not easily reconstructed ; its chronic dissolution constitutes the Occidental malady begun by Protestantism, developed by Deism, and completed by Scepticism. The disease is the more serious because, when it has appeared, its cure is not possible till it has followed its entire course, passing through these three successive degrees of anarchy, which separate the provisional harmony of Catholicism from the final order of Positivism.

* *Politique Positive*, vol. ii., chap. i.

† Reprinted in the *Appendix* to vol. iv. of the *Politique Positive*.

You would, therefore, have a false idea of the normal state of humanity if you thought that faith, in becoming Positive, must be restricted, the fact being that through that transformation the future will develop it, as it will also love and hope. All the precepts of Catholicism on the submission of reason to faith are programmes to be realised; they were oppressive in the end only because they had relation to chimerical beliefs. Positivism sanctions and develops this submission, which it reduces to the subordination of man to Humanity, of the present to the past. This will be the principal result of the Encyclopedic education, disposing men to make use of doctrines for conduct and judgment in place of contesting their truth. The faith must always be *demonstrable*, and it is, in fact, in this that the mental regeneration consists. But it cannot and need not be always *demonstrated*, since the conditions required for the demonstration of rules are seldom fulfilled by every one who has to apply them. As to understanding and even utilising what is not at all demonstrated to us, the case of the doctrine of the earth's motion has shown during two centuries that voluntary submission determines convictions more complete and more active than reasoning ever so well directed.

The failure of faith, which involves the disturbance of love and hope, is the modern disease of the Westerns, arising from the unstable nature of the beliefs on which human opinions at first rested. Every

one is in a state bordering on insanity through an habitual undue excitement of pride and vanity, so that any shock, physical or moral, may determine actual alienation of mind. Though almost all men have need of being led, nobody will accept this condition: every one claims to lead. The old synthesis being decadent and a new one being required to replace it, every one puts himself forward as a renovator of the human understanding, like Bacon or Descartes. All these regenerators must, however, resign that office, now that the spiritual reconstruction has been accomplished. Anyone who persists in seeking the synthesis after it has been found ensures his own unhappiness as much as he disturbs the public mind. Submission to the new faith can alone preserve from the ennui, the doubt, and the irresolution which at present result from the want of a spiritual guide. Yet the great majority of the Westerns are fated to fluctuate during their whole lives between retrogradation and anarchy; only those can free themselves from this necessity, whose gifted natures enable them to accept the Positive faith and actively further its installation.

From its constant reality and its characteristic utility, the new synthesis must naturally inspire a more complete and lasting submission than did the old. The latter by the vagueness of its precepts, the uncertainty of its motives, and the inanity of its tendencies, had often to be put aside even by its sincere

believers as inapplicable to real life. But rules always capable of being judged, and directly adapted to their destination, will create a full confidence in souls which are in earnest about action and not bent on dissertation. Submission, especially of the intellect, always represents a gain, even when it is compulsory, as in regard to external fatalities, by repressing egoism. When it is voluntary, it is the principal source of improvement by developing altruism. . . .

TO THE SAME.

10 Dante, 68 (24th July, 1856).

. . . THOUGH accustomed to the inconsistencies of Protestantism, I was not prepared for the intercalation you mention of pretended *social* Positivists between the soi-disant *intellectual* Positivists and the true—that is, the religious—Positivists. My motto *Live openly* cannot admit of the *back door* which you propose to me for the admission of these strange *thinkers*, to whom I could, in my circulars, only address a deserved condemnation from which I prefer to abstain. I cannot understand how these persons have produced in you an illusion as to their sincerity, which, in my opinion, is much less than that of the so-called “intellectuals.” Seeing that Positivism is gaining credit, they wish to have a share in it, but

without taking any obligation on themselves. With equal arrogance and folly, they would fain each erect himself into a Bacon or Descartes, judging the universal synthesis by the measure of their narrow powers and their paltry feelings, with a view to prolong the spiritual interregnum, and to retard the advent of a discipline of which they are personally afraid. But Positivism systematises and develops the empirical maxim of Catholicism on the connection between errors of the intellect and vices of the heart ; I will not let this maxim fall into oblivion, and will use it more and more to unmask my pretended adherents. . . . The subterfuges of your "thinkers" merit only my contempt, for the claims they recognise in me prescribe their co-operation, and yet they refuse it through fear of encouraging what they dislike in me, though I cannot cut myself in two to content people, who would be at bottom quite satisfied if I died of hunger, because this, they feel, would postpone the advent of a discipline which they dread without being able to escape from it.

Some weeks before receiving your letter, I had made to the Positivist Society an announcement directly contrary to the indulgence you now ask for on behalf of those "socials." In 1841, I expressed in a Note to vol. v. of my *Positive Philosophy*, the wish, formed fifteen years earlier, that philosophic and social discussions should be carried on between Positivists and Catholics exclusively, whilst Protestants,

Deists, and Sceptics—in a word, all metaphysicians, should *by common accord* be treated as incurable disturbers.* The time is come to realise this wish, even without waiting for the participation of the Catholics, by pressing all who believe in God to become Catholics in the name of logic and morality, whilst urging all those who do not believe in him to become Positivists, without admitting any third party.

TO THE SAME.

17 Dante, 68 (31st July, 1856).

. . . YOUR *thinker* appears to me to be one of those vulgar partisans of Protestant or Sceptical individualism, who, whilst they will not and cannot fulfil any of the conditions of competence, reserve to themselves a sovereign choice between the existing syntheses, or rather will never choose at all, wishing to perpetuate an interregnum favourable to their pretensions, which they will not submit to any discipline. But the situation of the West is becoming so serious that it will soon force *eclectics* to pronounce between the only two doctrines which present an organic character. It

* Comte afterwards modified, in some degree, his attitude towards Protestantism. See his letter to John Fisher of April 24, 1857; that to G. Audiffrent of May 7, 1857; and that to H. D. Hutton of July 14, 1857; also *Pol. Pos.* iv., pp. 387, 388.

would be well if all Protestants who cannot become Positivists would return to Catholicism. But though this is not possible, since their inconsistency is one of the features of the anarchy which now requires to be healed, the two extreme parties may at least agree in condemning all the equivocal personages, who persist in seeking to govern a situation which they do not understand. . . .

TO THE SAME.

3 Bichat, 68 (4th December, 1856).

. . . YOU are perfectly right in regarding Positivism as having a tendency to increase the dignity of the practical spirit, to which the theoretic spirit will be subordinated in the whole of my final treatise. My recent volume* must profoundly develop this reaction in all who can read it with advantage, that is, in Positivists who possess a knowledge of Mathematics. The simplest, the most largely cultivated, and the proudest of the sciences is there estimated at its just value, which chiefly consists in its forming a series of programmes only roughly outlined, and radically beyond our powers, so as to leave for ever unsolved most of the special questions which antiquity had

* *Synthèse Subjective*, vol. i., entitled *Système de Logique Positive, ou Traité de Philosophie Mathématique*.

already proposed to itself. Nothing is more sound than the maxim of the great Frederic, the truth of which has been felt by all eminent practical men, as to the native unfitness of the human mind for abstract speculations. They have really no other destination but that of procuring for concrete conceptions a sufficient generality; beyond this, they become alike inaccessible and useless. . . .

TO THE SAME.

11 *Charlemagne*, 69 (28th June, 1857).

. . . AT the stage which Positivism has now reached, it is on feeling and imagination that its ascendancy depends, and reasoning will henceforth be secondary. The doctrine and the priesthood having irrevocably risen, we have no longer to *prove* their necessity, as I did, in 1826, before they came into existence, in my early Essay* on the Spiritual Power. . . .

M. de Lombrail having in the first draft of his paper absurdly exaggerated the ascendancy of Humanity over her organs, so as to reduce great men to pure automatons, I put him on the right track, and possibly

* This Essay is printed in the Appendix to vol. iv. of the *Politique Positive*.

he may since have gone too far in the opposite direction. An appreciation so delicate as that of the real influence of the Great Being on Her impersonations, and the part which necessarily belongs to them, may easily give rise to deviations which are not of grave consequence in the first attempt of a young disciple ; . . . this difficult question will be systematically treated in my volume of next year. Meanwhile observe the notable difference of attitude of those impersonations in their relations with the two subjective elements of Humanity and Her objective element. Always submissive towards the Past, from which everything comes to us, and respectful towards Posterity, which will judge us, great men may often be disposed, especially during the principal transitions, to hold lightly, and even to despise (saving individual exceptions) the contemporary Public, when it impedes, instead of seconding, them ; though they ought always to love and pity it, and serve it whilst ruling it in the names of the future and the past.

Notwithstanding their highly judicious nature, your other questions are essentially premature : wait for my volume of 1858,* without, however, checking the spontaneous course of your own meditations. I may say at present that the transformation of the *Imitation* by substituting Humanity for God does not seem to me

* Comte having died September the 5th, 1857, this work was never written. Its intended title was *Système de Morale Positive, ou Traité de l'éducation universelle*.

capable of a suitable execution for the public, notwithstanding its private utility for all true Positivists. If experience has not already enlightened M. de Constant in this respect, I will try to divert him from an attempt which would often lead to forced or erroneous interpretations, since the Catholic synthesis must, of course, offer conceptions adapted only to its own nature, as is shown by the last book of the *Imitation*, so that the *transformation* would be reduced to a set of mere extracts, and would thus be deprived of any great social efficacy. In general, all my disciples ought to speak more than they write.

TO THE SAME.

27 Charlemagne, 69 (14th July, 1857).

. . . I APPROVE your practice of collecting such truly characteristic maxims as have gradually emanated from all times and countries, and I invite you to complete and systematise your collection. It might then realise the project which I have more than once described at meetings of the Positivist Society during the last five or six years, and which the unfortunate Jundzill might well have carried out—of composing a volume of permanent interest and usefulness, with the title, *The Spontaneous Oracles of Humanity*. I am

persuaded that poets and women would be found to supply the best part of it. Dante has always appeared to me more fruitful in really decisive sentences than even Thomas à Kempis (my daily reading of them makes me think so more and more), because the former was nearer to the Middle Ages, though he did not understand them.

The dedication* of my book, which I am glad to have made, to the venerable Daniel Encontre, has modified my opinion on Protestantism, but only so far as French Protestants are concerned, by leading me to appreciate better the social reaction—now capable of development—of the exceptional situation which deprived them of the domination with which their sect cannot, in general, dispense. Nevertheless, I am fully convinced that worthy Protestants of every kind will have their place in different degrees in the true party of order which Positivism will irrevocably constitute; Deists, Atheists, and Sceptics, especially the first and the last of these three groups, being definitively relegated to the party of disorder, of which they are at present the real leaders. I approve of most of your remarks on Protestantism, with the exception of that which relates to the *Bible*: the substitution of this dangerous reading, which has really only a historical

*The first volume of the *Synthèse Subjective* was dedicated to the memory of Encontre, Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Montauban, who had been an early and much respected teacher of Comte at the Lycée of Montpellier.

value, for that of the *Imitation*, would be an anarchical retrogradation. May you, my dear disciple, always increase in veneration and devotedness !

TO THE SAME.

28 Dante, 69 (12th August, 1857).

. . . THE irrationality of the medical art results from this—that its conceptions remain always collective, whilst the applications are always individual : so that the mutual harmony is essentially fortuitous, as is shown by the habitual disagreements of different physicians with respect to the commonest cases. Now their appreciation is no more normal than their treatment, and this inclines them to be alarmed or reassured without good reason. They are truly competent only for *special* instructions as to symptoms and means, without ever being able to embrace the treatment, or even the judgment, of a case in its totality. . . .

TO GEORGES AUDIFFRENT.*

10 *Cæsar*, 66 (2nd May, 1854).

. . . THE principal mission of the Priesthood consists in always judging aright the real worth of persons through (*à travers*) the accidents of situation, and even of education. . . .

TO THE SAME.

12 *Charlemagne*, 66 (29th June, 1854).

. . . . THOUGH Positivists alone, by virtue of their relativism, can reconcile a profound faith with entire tolerance, they yet cannot submit to the spiritual domination of souls which remain in the earlier stages of religious progress. The commonplace reproach of abandoning the belief of our fathers comes strangely from the monotheists of all shades, who would all still

* Besides the group of passages here following, there will be found in the *Appendix* another series of special interest, also from letters addressed to Dr. Audiffrent.

be polytheists, if their ancestors had never done what is censured in the descendants. But whilst undergoing the melancholy necessity of an anarchical situation, Positivists must always make the superiority of their sentiments felt by those who reject their beliefs. I hope, therefore, that the painful separation which you tell me has taken place, will never lead your good mother to complain of any diminution in your respectful tenderness. You must leave to *me* the sad anomaly of visiting my native town without seeing my old father there. . . .

•

TO THE SAME.

12 Dante, 66 (27th July, 1854).

. . . YOUR wise resolution relieves me from the necessity of addressing to you paternal remonstrances on the dangers of an indeterminate mode of life, which, I think, has lasted long enough for you. Every Positivist, even theoretic, ought now to take his place in some one of the recognised professions, and try to distinguish himself in it as well by his special aptitude and activity as by his general worth of heart, intellect, and character. I lived a life of labour for thirty years, but this did not at all interfere with my philosophic career. Though your

inherited fortune dispenses with the material necessity of professional work, it cannot preserve you from the intellectual and moral disadvantages connected with a vague mode of life. Until your theoretic career has assumed its definite and fixed character, your preparation will be rather aided than hindered by a special and obligatory occupation, which will besides facilitate your regenerative action on an ill-regulated social medium.

The choice you have made of a profession, I entirely approve, especially if, as I presume, you have in view rather the medical chairs than the acquisition of a practice, which latter will, besides, ere long take an official character, as one may see from the already sensible tendency towards the institution of public physicians for attendance on patients at their homes. The false position which this professional career offers is common to most of those existing in our anarchical society, if we except the *proletaires*, who do not usually feel the dignity of their calling. My just aversion for dissection, especially human, and principally when the subjects are of humble rank, has not prevented me, as you know, from approving the resolution of M. Foley, who yet, in becoming a physician, was abandoning another honorable occupation. . . .

TO THE SAME.

12 Moses, 67 (12th January, 1855).

... YOUR noble regrets and your becoming resignation with respect to the voluntary exile which you have felt bound to impose on yourself for two or three years, recall to me the new point of view under which I characterised Positivism in addressing our *confrères* on the first day of the present year. It consists in marking the *patriotic* satisfactions which the Religion of Humanity will offer to true Positivists, representing to them Paris as the adopted country of chosen souls, who seek to group themselves there, in order to procure for the sacred city the spiritual empire which the entire human preparation destines for it, whilst purifying it from all temporal domination. Since the end of the Middle Ages the Westerns have no longer *countries* properly so called, by reason of the exorbitant extension of existing political aggregations, so that they are obliged to pass directly from the family to Humanity without the normal intermediary, a necessity which must compromise the development of the social sentiment. Paris, the majority of its inhabitants having been born elsewhere, seems more than any other city to lack the patriotic character, but it tends, on the contrary, to

become the only focus of patriotism which can now exist. This was already sensible in the last century, when Paris directed the preparatory elaboration of the universal regeneration, and the explosion of the great crisis profoundly manifested this tendency. But it is Positivism that must develop it by making Paris the necessary metropolis of the final religion. The select souls who will take part in this sacred incorporation of the human planet around Paris, will, in securing the leadership of their adopted country, have the happiness of also serving their native cities by freeing them from a tyrannical centralisation. Thus conceived, the destined position of Paris becomes incomparable, as surpassing not only the intellectual presidency of Athens, but also the social supremacy of Rome. . . . A spiritual mother-country offers the special advantage that one can be incorporated in it without residing there, provided that he maintains full communication with his fellow-citizens.

TO THE SAME.

1 Homer, 67 (29th January, 1855).

. . . I CONGRATULATE you on having appreciated aright the deplorable deviation from which I had rather wished than hoped that diplomatic good sense would

preserve the Westerns, in spite of the seductions of military passion and the rhodomontades of the English Press. The holy war undertaken against war has now degenerated into a mad, and even culpable, aggression, which transfers morality to the side of the Tsar, because he is defending himself. Instead of persevering with childish obstinacy in this mistake, the right thing to do would be, at the risk of a deserved shame, to raise a vicious siege, and to take at last the attitude of pure precaution—which ought to have prevailed after the evacuation by the Russians of Ottoman territory—by wintering in Bulgaria and blockading the Black Sea, without persisting, however, in the ridiculous blockade of the Baltic. This was the conduct indicated by Positivist policy, and all statesmen would now be glad to have adopted it, instead of having to regret their disastrous proceedings. This sad experience will, perhaps, dispose them to feel the value of a theory which guides the present by means of a knowledge of the future deduced from the past, enables practical men to avoid grave errors, and renders them capable of resisting aberrations of public opinion, whether arising from spontaneous impulse or from artificial stimulation. In any case, I hope the mediation of Austria and Prussia will terminate a struggle which has taken a vicious character, and which besides does not rest, on either side, on any profound and popular impulse. Its unfortunate prolongation brings out, more and more clearly, the strong repugnance

felt by the Westerns for military life, and even the absence of any true warlike inclination over the entire globe, on which, for sixty years past, only defence has been crowned with success. . . .

The generation which saw the birth of Positivism having now come to an end, that of its social installation begins, which the little work* I have in contemplation will open in a truly conciliatory spirit, proper to bring together the select souls of all parties around the regenerative nucleus, which, as you justly observe, does not constitute a *party*, for the very reason that it embraces *all* the elements of the solution.

TO THE SAME.

19 Homer, 67 (16th February, 1855).

IT is a satisfaction to me to find my true disciples agreeing with me, as you have often done, in the appreciation of passing events. But I advise you to be more on your guard against outward impressions which would lead you sometimes to attach too much importance to them. If you place yourself, as every true philosopher ought to do, at the point of view of Posterity, you will see that I have been right in using the phrase *Russian incident*, though it has shocked

* The "Appel aux Conservateurs," published this year (1855).

some superficial minds, and that it is a mistake to apply the words *military phase* to an episode chiefly marked by a decisive manifestation of the repugnance for war now felt by all the Western populations, except English journalists, who ought to be sent to conquer the Crimea. However the prevailing empiricism may aggravate the situation, this abnormal event can only add to the confirmation which it has already afforded of the foreign policy of Positivism. Its deplorable prolongation would make more deeply felt how disastrous is a routine which commits the repose of the world to the culpable ambitions of the Germanic adventurers who surround the Tsar, combined with the factitious enthusiasm of British rhetoricians, without the governments and the populations on both sides being able to escape from impulses which, though opposed to their genuine tendencies, are seconded by the want of a true social doctrine to enlighten either party. . . . Positivism cannot expect anything but abusive language and calumnies from Frenchmen of the metaphysical schools, whilst the attacks made upon us by Englishmen and Germans will probably be as courteous as was that of the New York journalist.* . . . At bottom the triumph of Positivism over Theologism is reducible to that of the *Nous* over the *Moi*. However personal theological doctrine intrinsically is, the

* This refers to an article on Positivism which appeared in the *Methodist Review* of New York for January, 1852.

wisdom of the priesthood rendered it empirically social. But the doctrine of the metaphysicians can never be anything but individual, so as to excite dispositions at once retrograde and anarchical, by rejecting the division of the powers, and thus tending towards the pedantocracy which was the dream of the Greek sophists. These, then, are our real enemies, whilst the Catholic clergy will soon see in us heirs, and even defenders against the oppression with which they are threatened, if the three parts* of the theoretic budget are not suppressed simultaneously. Hence it is that I count on enlisting one in a hundred of the French priests, whilst I do not hope to convert one in a thousand of our pedants.

TO THE SAME.

13 Aristotle, 67 (10th March, 1855).

. . . THOUGH it seems paradoxical to represent Positivism as a guarantee of health, this aptitude cannot astonish those who know how dependent our corporeal existence is on cerebral harmony. You are, then, right in thinking that a man cannot with impunity remain anarchical or retrograde, since personal

* Viz. theological, metaphysical, and scientific, or the State-endowments of the Church, the University, and the Institute. See *Politique Positive*, IV., chap. 5.

well-being cannot, especially now-a-days, be independent of the universal order.

TO THE SAME.

19 Archimedes, 67 (13th April, 1855).

. . . I MUST specially commend your resolution to read continuously through, the great treatise* I have lately completed. It is only thus that you can sufficiently assimilate a truly indivisible composition, all whose parts will illustrate each other so as to dissipate your secondary uncertainties, instead of creating the embarrassments which you seem to fear. The six or seven weeks occupied in this synthetic operation will result, I hope, in giving you an imperturbable confidence in the early ascendancy of a doctrine which furnishes on all questions decisive solutions mutually accordant. . . .

TO THE SAME.

9 Cæsar, 67 (1st May, 1855).

. . . THE amendment on which you consult me with respect to the general course of your medical studies seems to me to be supported by good reasons.

* The *Politique Positive*.

Since the memorable treatise of Barthez* has now attracted your attention, the school of Montpellier no longer presents any special interest for you, as you would find there only a feeble reflection of that best representation of synthetic Biology. Marseilles offers you in sufficient measure the practical development of it, and its theoretic evolution at Montpellier is warped by Parisian reactions.

Besides its general inconveniences, your residence [at Marseilles] presents now the special danger of fixing your attention in an undue degree on the Russian incident. The advice I habitually give to Positivists not to allow themselves to be carried away by contemporary politics is particularly suitable to this melancholy episode, the details of which interfere with our appreciation of it as a whole. In the deplorable degeneration of protection into attack we find a striking result of the spiritual anarchy which for five centuries, and especially since the great crisis, leaves the Westerns at the mercy of circumstances, in the absence of principles of conduct. My next little publication† will utilise the grave lesson thus taught, to show what material disasters the intellectual and moral disorder is producing. . . . No case is better adapted to bring statesmen to an early sense of the

* "Nouveaux Éléments de la Science de l'Homme." The second edition of this work (1806) was included by Comte in the *Bibliothèque Positiviste*.

† The "Appel aux Conservateurs."

importance of subordinating their present and local empiricism to the general indications of Positive politics ; and the true adepts of the latter ought also to feel more deeply the necessity of preparing themselves, by a calm and reflective attitude, for the great mission which the situation of the West will impose upon them, perhaps before they have become fully worthy of it.

TO THE SAME.

28 Cæsar, 67 (20th May, 1855).

. . . ON Sunday next at 2 p.m. we shall be exceptionally occupied with a melancholy celebration, in which I am sure you will participate with a sacred fervour. Our eminent *confrère* Jundzill has succumbed before the middle of his thirtieth year to a tubercular phthisis, the nature of which he deplorably mistook through the fatal guidance of an unworthy physician. Interred on Sunday last by his family, who fanatically withdrew him from any solicitude of ours, he will be fitly appreciated by me on Sunday next, in our Oration, in the presence of all the Positivists of both sexes who are capable of feeling his intellectual, and still more, his moral worth.

. . . Being henceforth able to take my stand on a completely established doctrine, I shall, in my forthcoming

Appeal, extract from it the part immediately applicable to the rationalisation of present politics, referring the curious to its source in my systematic Treatise.* My little work will not require Occidental conservatives to become at once Positivists, capable of co-operating directly in the universal construction. It will only ask them to admit the three bases in accordance with which they must spontaneously rationalise their policy, namely, the fundamental dogma of Humanity ; the theoretic and practical supremacy of morals ; the necessary division of the two Powers. A serious adhesion to these three connected principles is sufficient to transform radically the general march of affairs. Now, each of them is fully prepared throughout the West, especially among the non-Protestant populations, to whom their simultaneous admission cannot offer any philosophical difficulty, nor even excite in them any political antipathy, when they shall learn that on this triple basis is already raised a complete edifice.

TO THE SAME.

5 Charlemagne, 67 (22nd June, 1855).

... IN your present isolated position, you ought to have recourse to correspondence with all those

* The *Politique Positive*.

whom you know to be in sympathy with you, whether generally or on special points. I should wish all true Positivists to enter into close relations, either by speech or by letter. Though their number is still small, their influence might already be much greater in the present decomposed state of the social medium, if their mutual contacts were more intimate and more frequent. The feebleness of the action we exercise must be chiefly imputed to the prevailing insufficiency of zeal amongst us. . . . It would be a sad case if the social torpor, which now forms the malady of the West, were to extend to those whose mission it is to heal it.

The memorable meeting for the commemoration of poor Jundzill, which I announced to you in my last, has furnished a touching confirmation of the general efficacy of Positivist contacts. Never had the two sexes been so well mixed as in this celebration, from which everyone went away feeling himself morally improved. This influence extended to a lady, a thorough Catholic, who had desired to be present at the ceremony, and was greatly touched and impressed by it, thus showing the aptitude of our worship to affect truly sympathetic souls, whatever may be their beliefs. Instances of this kind must, indeed, be exceptional. But Positivists can compensate for the rarity of such solemn meetings by habitual private relations, in which they should seek especially to bring themselves under feminine influences, to which we are already indebted for a notable,

though insufficient, increase of veneration and fraternity. . . .

Your reflections on death seem to be excusable only by the oppressive melancholy momentarily arising from your isolation. The precursors of Positivism in the last century already felt the vices of the theological and metaphysical tendencies in relation to this subject. In the best thinker* your native Provence can boast you will find this just reflection : "The thought of death makes us forget to live"; which is a natural prelude to his fine maxim : "To do great things, we must live as if we were never to die." All this will appear to you more worthy and more true than the sayings on death in which Montaigne shows himself as weak as the Christians. But I am disposed to believe that you have gone astray in this instance rather in expression than in opinion, intending to allude to the Positivist theory of subjective immortality.

As to your conjectures on longevity, I have only to encourage you to systematise them, and so give them greater firmness and extension. We are in every department only at the beginning of improvement, even with respect to our situation, but especially with respect to our nature. Longevity, which excited so many vague hopes in Bacon and Descartes, will furnish an ample domain of conceptions and ameliora-

* Vauvenargues.

tions. My spiritual father* went so far as to dream of an indefinite prolongation of life. Though Positive philosophy sets aside such chimeras, it confirms us in the hope of a notable and growing success by means of the progress of the self-government of our race, completed by the action of heredity.

This leads me to indicate to you, as bearing on this subject, a general conception which will find its place, in 1858, in the treatise on Human Nature which is to form the first half of my *Morale Positive*. We must regard as the chief imperfection of our individual organism the insufficient harmony between the body and the brain. The brain could, I believe, use up two, or perhaps three, bodies, if the succession were possible, so much has it the advantage in stability. In the majority of normal cases the statue falls only because the pedestal has decayed. This discordance is not confined to premature deaths: it often exists in the best class of old men. After a century of duration, the brain of Fontenelle ceased to perform its functions only for want of a vegetative basis. You can feel, then, what an opening there is for our means of increasing longevity, when they will be directed systematically to the establishment of a better harmony between the body and the brain by the development of reactions, as yet imperfectly understood, of our moral on our physical nature.

* Condorcet, in his "Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain."

In fixing at about two centuries the maximum duration compatible with the human constitution, Hufeland* was inspired only by purely empirical observations on the best cases of ascertained longevity. But if he had been guided by the above-mentioned conception, he would have obtained a more favourable reception for his estimate, the problem of longevity being systematically presented as consisting in making the body last as long as the brain can naturally live. Considered in this way, the utopia seems really capable of realisation in the end, and it might even be reasonably hoped to increase also the intrinsic longevity of the brain.

TO THE SAME.

26 Charlemagne, 67 (13th July, 1855).

. . . MANY who call themselves Positivists employ two opposite subterfuges to excuse themselves for not contributing to the subsidy instituted for my maintenance. In England, the individualism which naturally characterises the Protestant medium disposes some truly worthy persons to regard my position as wanting in dignity, because I ought, in their opinion,

* In his "Art of Prolonging Life," chap. 6.

to earn my bread by work unconnected with my mission, whatever detriment the latter might thus receive. In France, it is not disputed that I ought to be supported by the public, so as to be able to devote my energies and my time exclusively to my immense and difficult office. But the egoistic spirit justifies a non-participation in this patronage by representing it as a duty incumbent on the Government, and expressing the hope that political changes will soon lead to the performance of the obligation, content, in the meantime, to let me perish of hunger, unless private motives induce friends to assist me.

In my next circular, I will remind Positivists of the solemn declaration by which, three years ago, I fixed my personal situation in a published letter, addressed to M. Vieillard, stating that I renounced any place or pension which might be offered by the government, and had resolved to make my subsistence rest altogether on the free contributions of my adherents or protectors. It was this decision only which enabled me, at the close of my principal work, to demand, without inconsistency, the entire suppression of the theoretic budget as an indispensable condition of the preparatory system which my own example had inaugurated. Without this guarantee of independence and of true dignity, which I should desire to extend to three generations, the Positive priesthood cannot acquire or retain the confidence necessary for its regenerating ascendancy.

. . . In my forthcoming *Appeal to Conservatives* I have earnestly advised our present ruler to proclaim himself *Perpetual Dictator* of the French Republic, with the power of choosing his successor, .'. . in accordance with the sociocratic principle.

. . . In the Preface to the same publication I will take occasion to testify my gratitude to the much misjudged government of the Restoration. Under it my most fundamental thoughts peacefully took shape, and were received in a just spirit, the literary class having not yet conspired to impede their development and diffusion. This prelude will correspond to the general tone of the little work, in which I throughout exhibit my preference of the retrogrades to the revolutionists. Whatever indignation it may excite amongst the latter, I must express the regret I felt at the fall of the most honest, the most noble, and the most truly liberal of all the governments under which I have lived. I am convinced that, if the *coup d'état* of the 25th July, 1830, had succeeded, we should have had twenty years sooner the government of republican conservatives united with conservative republicans to deliver us from the fatal oscillation between retrograde demagogues and demagogic retrogrades, as I have explained in my *Appeal*. . . .

The Occidental malady has been well characterised by Lamennais in the title of the only work of his which deserves to live—"Indifference on the subject of Religion."

TO THE SAME.

18 Dante, 67 (2nd August, 1855).

. . . NOTWITHSTANDING its shortcomings and its vices, this noble profession [the medical] is at present that which is most suitable for such Positivists as are better fitted for theory than for practice. In consequence of its happy independence—especially in France, where the discipline once exercised by the corporations has been dissolved—its tendency towards the true Priesthood can develop itself freely, particularly in those whom a pecuniary competence liberates from the too ardent pursuit of gain. Hence I recommend the choice of this profession to most young Positivists who are not distinctly devoted to industrial life as *Entrepreneurs* or as workmen. . . .

Having been led to examine more closely the case of America, the philosophy of history, applied with the precision specially required for the guidance of practice, has revealed to me the destination reserved for the proletaires whom our friends of New York have been trying to awaken. At that city, and at Boston and Philadelphia, are to be found descendants of the noble men of the working classes, worthy co-operators with Cromwell, who emigrated to America to preserve themselves from the oppression or degradation which threatened them on the part of the Anglican Church.

They have, up to the present, found in their new country only one occasion for manifesting and developing their social aspirations, namely, in fighting for American independence, which was essentially due to their devoted efforts. But Positivism will again bring them prominently forward, in the midst of a corrupting industrialism, by showing them the connection between the Revolution which failed in England and that which France carried out two generations since. When they have been stirred into life by an organic doctrine, they will avail themselves of the liberty proper to the American situation to visit the mother country and re-awaken a proletariat there stifled under Anglicanism and aristocracy. At the same time, they will propagate the Positive religion amongst the South-Americans, and first of all in Mexico, by developing its affinities with Catholicism. . . .

TO THE SAME.

11 Gutenberg, 67 (23rd August, 1855).

. . . How suitable the medical profession is at present for Positivists, and they for it, has been already shown by decisive examples. This mutual adaptation will soon exhibit itself so largely, that Positivist physicians will come to be regarded as a special class, like the Homœopathists, though

distinguished from the others on better grounds than they. If their moral conduct is, as I hope it will be, conformable to their intellectual attitude, they will be recognised by the public and by individuals as more synthetic and more sympathetic than others, so as speedily to prevail. Healing better and drugging less, they will obtain the confidence of families, which will soon extend from *physique* to *moral*, since they will combine the two faces of human nature. At the same time, the authorities will not be slow to entrust to them by preference, especially in France, the study of the great measures of public hygiene, which naturally require the habitual combination of the two sides of an indivisible problem, at once social and personal. . . .

In your touching explanation as to the Positivist precept of the forgiveness of injuries, you have not sufficiently distinguished between forgetting and forgiving. Besides that the former is not always possible, it would tend to diminish the merit of the latter. We ought to endeavour to forget only so far as is necessary in order to forgive. Outside of this limit it is well to preserve, by way of instruction, the memory of acts which tend to characterise the conduct of others. Though the wrongs have been done to ourselves, we ought not, from this point of view, to forget them any more than if they were done to others, provided that our partiality for ourselves does not affect our just appreciation of them.

A quite recent visit has increased my hope of seeing before long the Positive religion propagated directly in the British world, independently of the powerful reaction which will be exercised by the American proletariat. . . . Several indications had already confirmed the reality of the anticipation suggested to me by theory, when I was writing my final Preface last year, as to a sort of persistent conspiracy of English men of letters, opposing social Positivism in the name of intellectual Positivism. I am now certain of some such action, from the state of mind of the free thinkers, who, under the name of Secularists, have arisen lately at London, unhappily negative in their attitude, but hostile to every form of theological hypocrisy. Notwithstanding their natural wish to follow the development of Positivism, they did not know that I had written anything since my *Philosophie*: which shows the temporary success of the efforts of Messrs. Mill, Lewes, &c., and all the *Times* coterie, to turn men away from reading my *Politique*, by representing it as a deviation in the direction of mysticism and tyranny. The same class which, at the outset of my career, disputed the possibility of philosophy ever becoming Positive, now seek to prevent religion from experiencing a similar renovation, which they dislike from fear of the discipline it would enforce.

In spite of these efforts, the second conspiracy will be sooner and more easily surmounted than the first.

The different aspirations towards social regeneration, which exist outside the literary class, will lead men to rise from my philosophy to my political doctrine, which derives its special character from my Religion. I ought not, therefore, to feel any uneasiness at these culpable intrigues. They affect only the increase of material assistance to Positivism which might have been expected from England, especially since Miss Martineau's publication. But the clever combinations of the leaders of the English Press will ere long be defeated by the revolutionary ardour of the Socialists.

They sent me last year a long and memorable letter, written in their name by a Frenchman then residing in London. My reply addressed to them strong, though fatherly, remonstrances against their negative attitude, which I represented as tending to fortify the system of hypocrisy by inspiring fears of anarchy. Their sincerity in their relations with me was proved by the request made by two of their deputies, in an interview I granted them, on the 5th of August, to be permitted to insert my letter in their weekly organ, *The Reasoner**—a permission which I at once accorded. This act of deference on their part was completed, a day or two since, by a decisive visit from their chief, of whose popular influence you can judge when I inform you that he was the organiser of the manifestation which lately took place against

* It seems never to have appeared in that periodical.

the Sunday Bill. Further, he has fully adopted the project of publishing separately, under the title *Philosophy of History*, an English translation, which he will himself execute,* of the third volume of my *Politique*, the one which can best be detached from the others. The appearance of this will suffice to dissipate the conspiracy of silence.

TO THE SAME.

21 Gutenberg, 67 (2nd September, 1855).

. . . BEING led to think that the formation of the Positivist Priesthood may be required earlier than I had supposed, I have been fixing the conditions to be satisfied by its members. I do not here speak of the moral conditions, though they must always be treated as the most important, because they do not admit of being stated in a general formula, but must be appreciated in individual cases by the High Priest of Humanity, aided by testimonies deserving of confidence. Supposing these fulfilled, I have determined the Encyclopedic tests which alone can be distinctly formulated, and which I proceed to explain, as I have done to M. Laffitte, because you are, like him, one of the first to whom they will be applied.

* This project of Mr. Holyoake's was not carried out. The volume was translated by Professor Beesly.

They consist of *seven* successive Theses at an interval of at least one month, and at most three months, respectively bearing on the seven fundamental sciences : Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology, and Morals. The choice of the questions to be considered in them is left entirely to the responsibility of the candidate, whom I shall, however, invite to make them, as far as possible, connected, but without enforcing as indispensable this condition, often very difficult to realise. To secure the originality of the Theses, and to measure the candidate's aptitude for oral exposition, each of them, when it has been accepted, will be followed, seven days afterwards, by a public examination on the corresponding science.

Having instituted these rules to improve, and not to fetter, the pontifical choice, I authorise the High Priest to dispense with some of the Theses, and perhaps with the first four, in cases which, though exceptional, may be so dealt with for reasons stated, especially during the transition. Though the last three can scarcely ever be dispensed with, my final volume has formally indicated the possibility of elevation to the priesthood without even passing through the office of vicar. The entire seven Theses being always printed, every vicar, when appointed, will find himself the author of a volume capable of proving to the competent public the fitness of the choice. . . .

TO THE SAME.

14 *Shakspeare*, 67 (23rd September, 1855).

. . . THE *Appeal to Conservatives* marks the true position of Positivists in the present state of society. It is a first step towards realising my fundamental proclamation as to our taking possession of the general direction of human affairs. It assigns to the best of the three existing parties* the rule which it must exercise over the other two until the Positivists are in a condition to govern. During this first stage of the organic transition, we must only aim at getting hold of *spiritual* power, so as to direct public opinion and to prepare our statesmen. In this stage our practical men must act only as auxiliaries of our theoreticians, whose influence will ultimately bring about the political ascendancy of those who at first restrict their action to seconding the religious movement. We must at present regard the institution, or rather the development, of the Positive Priesthood as our principal task. . . .

TO THE SAME.

12 *Descartes*, 67 (19th October, 1855).

. . . WHEN you avow with noble candour the benefits you have already derived from a confiding

* Conservatives, Retrogrades, Revolutionists.

submission towards the furtherance and consolidation of your personal progress, you exhibit what is the most decisive and the only truly complete evidence of the advent of a new spiritual power. A man has not really risen above the revolutionary state, so long as he limits himself to the recognition of principles of which he has personally obtained a demonstration (all the Anarchists do that more or less), whilst reserving to himself as his individual work the construction of the universal synthesis. Conversion is effected, and authority reconstructed, only when a man adopts and practises views admitted purely on the ground of confidence, from their connection, even confusedly felt, with fundamental points of doctrine previously accepted. It is only then that he can usefully devote his life to the development of consequences, instead of wasting it in discussing principles without being able to establish anything. In a word, we must conceive the Positive faith as always demonstrable, and not require it to be actually demonstrated, which would destroy the greatest merit, and even the chief utility, of confidence.

After having been long contested or ignored, these natural conditions of a real discipline are now accepted and practised by true Positivists. Mr. Fisher, in his memorable first letter from Manchester, furnished a touching proof of this when he quoted as his answer to those who reproached him with his submission as showing servility, the admirable sentence of St. Paul—

"Being bound, I am free."* This fine maxim describes the salutary influence of a right discipline, which, in fact, alone delivers us from the ennui, the doubt, and the irresolution, to which souls destitute of a rule are habitually subject. Indispensable to all believers, this disposition is peculiarly requisite in the priests of Humanity, to form a sufficient bond between them and the Universal Pontiff, whose worthy auxiliaries they are to be. Never will I confer the office of priest on any one who does not fulfil this condition, however satisfactory may be his encyclopedic tests, and even his other moral guarantees.

We had on Friday last a precious religious ceremony on the occasion of the first application of the rule laid down in my last volume with respect to the Positivist preamble of the conjugal tie. M. Fili, in accordance with his mature convictions and my solemn explanations, nobly signed, in the presence of his future wife and several spectators of both sexes, an engagement binding him to a purely fraternal cohabitation during the three months following the civil union, so that the religious consecration may be fittingly prepared. Thus are irrevocably dissipated the frivolous objections which old revolutionary habits had at first founded on the pretended impossibility of this institution. . . . Women, still strangers to Positivism, who were present, highly appreciated the ceremony ; and it was

* Similar sentiments are found in St. Paul, as in 1 Cor. vii. 22, and ix. 19 ; but these words do not occur in his Epistles.

generally felt that the new institution, which was introduced as a guarantee of maturity for the engagement of perpetual widowhood, is the best inauguration of the normal married state, and brings into special prominence the moral superiority of the Positive religion. . . .

TO THE SAME.

25 Descartes, 67 (1st November, 1855).

. . . I ATTACH much value to your noble utopia on the threefold extinction of war, penury, and disease. For its proper appreciation it must be systematised from the Positive point of view. It is then seen that this triple progress constitutes a normal series, according to the decreasing generality and the increasing difficulty of the successive improvements. The first, concerning the widest social relations, is now essentially realised, since war is henceforward only a transitory accident, the entire elimination of which a universal presentiment foretells. The second, being relative to the internal organisation of each people, offers a greater importance, and also presents greater difficulties; yet this progress excites aspirations as permanent as they are unanimous, which must announce its early realisation. The third, involving purely individual phenomena, the most particular and the most complicated of all, is the most precious, but also the

most difficult, and so can at present be grasped only by souls of a superior order, though its connection with the other two must ensure its realisation, only at a later period. In this triple improvement the first term necessarily preceded, and even prepared, Positivism, which will, on the other hand, be the source from which the second and third will spring.

. . Positivist physicians, by the decisive plenitude of their habitually synthetic views, will necessarily be led to transform their office into a priesthood by comprehending the *moral* as much as, and even more than, the *physique*. Always regarding disease as having an essentially cerebral seat,* though the symptoms most frequently affect the bodily organs, they will soon fix their attention, first from the side of pathology, then from that of therapeutics, on a crowd of intellectual and moral changes which now remain unnoticed until they issue in insanity properly so called. In their prescriptions, emotions and studies will appear as means of treatment, which will procure for them the intimate and entire confidence of families, whenever they are truly at the level of their mission in heart as well as in head.

. . . A long and precious visit which was paid me on Sunday by my noble and tender physician, Dr. Robinet, confirms me in the belief of the existence of such a disposition in all the Positivist physicians. It

* See Appendix.

has also assured me of their general tendency to appreciate worthily the great Broussais, now judged aright only by them, whilst others exploit him and at the same time vilify him. Dr. Robinet has been led in his active practice to come ever closer to the principles, or rather the general ideas, pathological and even therapeutic, of this—the only man of genius whom medicine can boast since Hippocrates (Gall and Cabanis having been rather philosophers than physicians, and Boerhaave and Barthez distinguished chiefly as professors).

These cordial indications will show you that I am not entirely absorbed by the preparation of my new volume, the principal conceptions of which are, indeed, already irrevocably elaborated. The most difficult effort which it involves is required for the preliminary chapter. In this long and decisive Introduction I have to expound, first, the conception of the Universal Synthesis ; then, the institution of Positive Logic ; and, lastly, the co-ordination of Mathematical Philosophy. I can already give you a notion of the general spirit of this great treatise by the direct contrast between my final definition of Logic, and that which appears in the first volume of my *Politique Positive*. I there defined the true Logic as comprising the whole of the means proper for *unveiling* to us all the *truths* we ought to know. Here I will define it as comprising the whole of the means proper for *inspiring* the *conceptions* which we ought to entertain. Besides

the change from passive to active in the general character of our intellectual efforts, we must especially note the normal extension thus given to Positive Logic by comprehending within it the domain of fiction as well as that of truth, and thus making it æsthetic as well as theoretic. By this enlarged view I have been led to realise in this treatise the incorporation of Fetishism in Positivism, and the development (connected with this) of subjective media, which I had at first reserved for my work on Morals, where both conceptions will receive a full exposition. You may imagine the thoroughly original and profoundly decisive character presented by Mathematical philosophy when thus approached; so that the professional geometers or rather the algebraists (the only mathematicians we now have) will naturally be enemies of this treatise, which will be utilised only by the general public.

Two days since, I received from New York (or, more correctly, from Long Island) another letter from the worthy founder* of our American group. It is, like his former one, notable for the intimate union of enthusiasm and reflection. This combination, as rare as it is decisive, must soon, I think, regularly characterise Positivist convictions, when the heart takes the ascendancy over the intellect which rightly belongs to it. Such a temper surprises us only in consequence

* Mr. Henry Edger.

of the fatally revolutionary origin of most of our present conversions, in which men rise from philosophy to religion, when such an evolution does not miscarry. But now that Positivism is complete, convictions may, and even must, more and more take a religious character; this is the final and the truly normal course. An enthusiasm will thus be developed, which now seems strange, and even artificial, to souls too exclusively occupied with reflection. We shall habitually regard *Enthusiasm* as naturally associated with Positivism, by reason of the relative character and the essentially altruistic tendency of the system, whilst Theologism, from its egoistic and absolute spirit, could inspire only *Fanaticism*, in which self-devotion and veneration are sullied by the pride and vanity called forth by the maintenance of beliefs incapable of demonstration.

Besides this general remark, Mr. Edger's memorable letter deserves to be specially noted for its decisive manifestation of the habitual tendency to due discipline which shows itself in profoundly energetic souls. I lately asked you to notice the precious conformity of your own dispositions in that respect with those of Mr. Fisher, who repelled idle charges of servility by quoting the admirable sentence of St. Paul, "Being bound, I am free," which, in fact, expresses the natural result of voluntary subordination. Mr. Edger completes this in his own way by declaring that the need of law is everywhere felt,

and that our principal embarrassments arise from the exercise of *will*. "Every appropriate indication," he says, "coming from my spiritual chief, dissipates at once my hesitation on any point." We ought to congratulate ourselves on the fact—best symptom of our speedy success—that the only souls fully emancipated are also the only ones which can now submit themselves to an active discipline. Now that Positivism is irrevocably constituted, its ascendancy must mainly depend on the permanent and entire union of its true adherents; and such a decisive union can result only from their common devotedness, which cannot be habitual apart from voluntary subordination, which will soon be the chief character distinguishing us from the revolutionists, and even from the retrogrades, amongst whom discipline is more apparent than real. . . .

TO THE SAME.

2 Bichat, 67 (4th December, 1855).

. . . A TENDENCY to vagueness is the danger usually besetting philosophic intellects, when they are exercised on questions, which, though legitimate, are prematurely raised. . . .

TO THE SAME.

17 Moses, 68 (17th January, 1856).

. . . I AM not surprised at your dissatisfaction with the metaphysical doctrine which the pretended successors of Barthez preach, alike without spirit and without genuine conviction. It is better to study in the writings of the master himself the provisional vitalism which must serve to correct the Parisian materialism, until the definitive vitalism prevails through the influence of the synthetic school which will arise under Positivism, and of which, I trust, your medical career will offer one of the best types.

Since the recent composition of my Testament, which has placed me permanently in a posthumous attitude of mind, I perceive more distinctly than before, that, notwithstanding the justness of the noble reflections in your letter, it is to the Positivists themselves that we must chiefly attribute the slowness and the limitation of the progress of their religion among the Westerns. If they were more devoted and so more united, the homogeneity, the plenitude, the coherence, and even the opportuneness of their doctrine would necessarily obtain for them a wide and speedy ascendancy, which would not be hindered by their small number, a circumstance, indeed, favourable to their discipline. But the fatality which compelled me to address myself first to the

revolutionists, from amongst whom I had myself to rise, still weighs on the installation of my work, which has slowly advanced from science through philosophy to religion. The heart being thus last touched in my disciples as in myself, their convictions have not been able, up to the present, to modify their feelings sufficiently to regenerate their habits, on which their conduct must depend. This result, which will alone be decisive, could not be realised until my religious construction was completed. However, it does already become sensible in my best disciples, especially those of them who are engaged in practical pursuits, whose devotedness and union are rapidly increasing, as well as their spirit of reverence and subordination. In order to consolidate and develop discipline, by creating the first element of a hierarchy, I have lately proclaimed in our Positivist Society my thirteen Testamentary Executors, and have invited my followers to consider the persons thus chosen as forming a fraternal aristocracy amongst my disciples, which will render our Church more stable and more active, since no association can really exist without inequality. . . .

TO THE SAME.

24 Homer, 68 (21st February, 1856).

YOUR last letter contains noble reflections on the general situation of the West, and the grave

deviations which may soon arise from the growing tendency to materialise everything. Nothing can better show the need of the intervention, in the midst of such anarchy, of the Religion which is destined to surmount it, and whose doctrine, now complete, requires only a worthy priesthood. We must hope that true believers will thus be led to feel how important it is to consolidate and develop the Positivist subsidy, on which depends the formation of a sacerdotal nucleus.

From the invasion of France in the fourteenth century to the shameful Opium War with China in 1841, the British power has more and more become a disturbing influence in the affairs of the world. But the Human priesthood, however limited its number may yet be, is now in a position to point out and even to denounce all deviations which, owing to the want of spiritual discipline, have arisen from the unbridled abuse of material power, supported by sophists venal or misled. We must prepare ourselves to fulfil aright, in any of the eventualities you justly dread, the normal office of those on whom their doctrine and the public situation alike call to regulate human life, which is everywhere indivisible and continuous.

. . . The systematisation of method in my third and last great construction may be summed up in the suppression of the name Mathematics, and the adoption of the title Logic, for the fundamental

science which has to elaborate the Positive method in studying universal existence reduced to its three necessary attributes—number, extension, and motion. The Encyclopedic scale is henceforth condensed in a normal progression of three sciences, respectively fundamental, preparatory, and final. If we give them the names most conformable with spontaneous usages, they will be Logic (hitherto called Mathematics), Physics (Astronomy, Physics properly so called, and Chemistry), and Morals (Biology, Sociology, and Morals properly so called). . . .

TO THE SAME.

17 Aristotle, 68 (13th March, 1856).

. . . I HAVE adopted your happy application of my new form of the Encyclopedic progression to the condensation of the sacerdotal theses, which will henceforth be logical, physical, and moral, with a fixed interval of three months between one and the other, the oral examination, which comes seven days after each thesis, making it possible to remedy any disadvantage which might arise from this condensation. . . .

*TO THE SAME.**10 Shakspeare, 68 (18th September, 1856).*

ON Thursday last I celebrated the preamble of the Positivist marriage of M. F., who was civilly married the second day after, and according to the Catholic rite the day before yesterday. This second example of the new institution has given rise to important explanations in consequence of a kind of revolutionary protest, which showed itself on the part of a number of our brethren, and even of our sisters, against the concession which the couple, in accordance with my advice, granted to the theological demands of their families. But the remonstrances of last Thursday will relieve me from the necessity, on any future occasion, of giving special exhortations to the large-minded tolerance which ought to characterise the conduct of Positivists, as is indicated by the formula in which I briefly describe our practical system during the entire course of the final transition: "conciliatory in act, inflexible in principle." The Catholic clergy wisely abstain from requiring in these circumstances any profession of theological faith, and it would be strange that Positivists, with a profoundly relative doctrine, should be more intolerant. To define better their conduct in such cases, I supposed the union to be taking place, at (say) Goa or Bombay, where the population is divided

between Christianity, Islamism, and Polytheism ; the couple ought then to be disposed to have their marriage blessed at the Church, the Mosque, and the Pagoda, in order that it might be equally held sacred by their different fellow-citizens.

A recent letter from M. Laffitte describes as existing at Bordeaux a state of torpor similar to that which you find at Marseilles. But this symptom is not at all alarming, for it announces the definitive cessation of metaphysical illusions, which naturally took place when universal suffrage had for offspring the Empire. This disposition must in the end be favourable to Positivism, since it tends to concentrate the regenerative movement in Paris by the increasing abdication of the initiative by other centres, including, besides our provincial cities, Rome, London, Berlin, &c. . . .

TO THE SAME.

14 Descartes, 68 (20th October, 1856).

. . . PROVIDED that your doctorate is taken at Paris, you can, without disadvantage, pass most of your examinations at Montpellier. I am glad that the metaphysical verbiage of this school* does not prevent

* 'The vitalists, who,' as he says in another letter, 'have always felt the indivisibility of human nature, through which principle we can logically lead them to our point of view.' (16 Moses, 69).

you from appreciating the synthetic character in which it contrasts with the Parisian school, so little worthy of the human metropolis. At bottom, as Blainville has judiciously observed, Bichat was a product of Montpellier rather than of Paris, as was also, though less directly, Broussais.* From the preponderance which synthesis must now obtain, Spiritualism is less remote from Positivism than Materialism in any one who has studied the sciences. . . . The justness and depth of your medical reflections confirm the high opinion I have always conceived of your future theoretic, or rather sacerdotal, career. Besides the general usefulness, logical and even scientific, of well-constructed utopias, we ought to look hopefully to a real improvement of the human organism by a continuous development of the true providence. The progress which you suppose in it consists essentially in the consolidation and extension of Unity, the permanent advance of which comprises the total result of the supreme movement. Though impassable limits exist in this, as in so many other cases, we cannot at all fix, at present, the degree of improvement which will be finally attained. It is truly strange that, whilst exaggerating progress in relation to the less modifiable phenomena, men restrict so much the range of improvement in those which are most so. . . .

* 'As to Cabanis,' he elsewhere says, 'this is not disputed.'

TO THE SAME.

6 Bichat, 68 (7th December, 1856).

. . . POSTERITY will judge our contemporaries, both individually and collectively, chiefly by their conduct towards Positivism, as it did in the parallel case of the rise of Catholicism. Its justice will not spare those who, not adhering to the new faith, follow its development in a malevolent spirit, or even with indifference. But it will most strongly condemn those who, though convinced adherents, are so lukewarm in its support as to withhold the easy co-operation which is expected from them. . . .

Positivism is so much in harmony with the fundamental situation of the West that for the last thirty years every social shock has attracted to us many temporary adherents, seeking to exploit our approaching success, and in the dreams of their coarse ambition making no distinction between the spiritual and the temporal. Perhaps the majority of those who have been admitted to the Positivist Society since its foundation have really had no other aim but to push themselves ; and many have viewed their subscriptions to our funds as a profitable investment, . . . and have discontinued them when they found that I remained destitute of temporal influence. . . .

The great construction of Positivist worship, embracing all real existences, indicated in my last work, will be developed in my next two volumes,* in which the three principal divinities† will be assisted by their intermediaries, the Sky being first intercalated, then the twofold fluid envelope between Space and the Earth, whilst Vegetality, followed by Animality, connects the Earth with Humanity. These seven degrees of adoration will form a scale essentially conformable to those of thought and of action, so as to inspire a sense of the plenitude of the true religion and its fitness to combine together all the preparatory faiths.

. . . You show yourself at present ungrateful to Mathematics, to which you owe, notwithstanding the vicious way in which it is taught, the habits of Positive rationality which you habitually exercise. . . .

You have not sufficiently reflected on the difficulty of the problem presented by the construction of a true Logic. On the one hand, we cannot dispute the old precept which placed its study before that of the sciences, as in the Middle Ages, when the *Trivium* regularly preceded the *Quadrivium*. This condition of rationality became illusory and even tended to mislead, when it was applied to the metaphysical Logic; but this does not affect the fundamental correctness of a precept to which the Positive Logic restores all its value and authority. But, on the other

* On Theoretical and Practical Morals.

† Space, Earth, and Humanity.

hand, the study of method is necessarily inseparable from that of doctrine. We can only reconcile these two conditions, which seem contradictory, by raising the initial science to the position of a universal logic, indispensable but insufficient, consecrated on the first ground and disciplined on the other. . . .

The only really new conception which I had intended to put forward in the projected opusculé on Paris, was the determination of the final capital of our planet. Paris can retain its universal pre-eminence only as centre of the Western Commonwealth, so long as this vanguard of our race has the superiority over the rest. But when Positivism shall have produced a sufficient homogeneity, the *West* will efface itself in presence of the *Earth*, and Paris will no longer fulfil the several essential conditions of a universal centre. Then, the definitive capital for the entire duration of our species will be Constantinople, which Islamism holds in trust for the union of East and West by the merging of the theocracies in the final Sociocracy. I think it probable that this revolution will take place in seven centuries, if, according to my announcement, the next century sees Positivism sufficiently accepted by all the true rulers of the world. This great displacement would be peacefully effected in accordance with a decision of the universal Pontiff, transferring his seat from the provisional capital to the true eternal city, in which are united all the great human memories.

TO THE SAME.

2 *Moses*, 69 (2nd January, 1857).

. . . THE first Part of Mr. Congreve's *Gibraltar* is truly excellent, both morally and politically.

. . . It is most important that all my worthy French disciples should soon place themselves in a position to be able to read works written in the other occidental languages—especially in English, for politics and even for religion, and in Italian, for poetry.

TO THE SAME.

16 *Moses*, 69 (16th January, 1857).

. . . YOUR appreciation of the dangers which now threaten Asia from the prevailing passion for industrial development has arisen in some degree from a generous but ill-founded sentiment. In the first place, the opening of the Suez canal would be rather contrary than favourable to English domination by replacing the Indian trade in its most natural course, which would soon turn to the advantage of the states bordering on the Mediterranean. In the second place, in this confused industrial rush of the Westerns on Asia, the theocratic populations really run no other risk than the very serious one of being rapidly

corrupted. Their social mass is too great to admit of their being exposed to an extermination comparable to that of the Americans by the Spaniards. Besides, if such a crime were contemplated, it would certainly be prevented by the Occidental police, which did not exist in the sixteenth century. As to the recent attack on Canton of which you inform me, I think it will excite serious protests in England, or will soon be disavowed there. We shall ere long find a spontaneous support for the moral action of Positivism on foreign relations, since English voices are raised with increasing energy against the oppression of India.

We must only lament, with respect to the imminent industrial advance of which you speak, that practical forces are developing more rapidly than the convictions which ought to regulate their employment. But the very excess of the evil will create an earnest desire for the remedy, which lies in the application of a doctrine now irrevocably constituted, and already capable of guiding the regenerating Priesthood as well as the spontaneous Chivalry* which it needs in order to act with effect. If we are preserved from intestine disturbances, the truly social questions will soon have absorbed the attention of the West, so as to make the moral reorganisation prevail over the material movement. This organic tendency will show itself first in the international order, which has been longer and more profoundly troubled. . . .

* See *Catéchisme Positiviste*, p. 313.

*TO THE SAME.**1 Homer, 69 (29th January, 1857).*

. . . I HAVE been led to give at our last meeting* special instructions, which will become more and more necessary for true Positivists, on the practical obligation of subordinating private life to public life. None of my disciples disputes or doubts this subordination as a general principle. But perhaps none knows how to apply it aright, in consequence of the profound change wrought in the Roman and feudal manners by the modern anarchy, which leaves most men, and all women, without any public life, and thus exposed without control to private impulses. It is the business of true Positivists to re-establish in this respect right habits, in conformity with the theory of Unity, which always subordinates more particular to more general relations. All my worthy disciples being spontaneously associated with the spiritual reorganisation of the West, each of them will soon have—like myself, though in inferior degrees—a true public life, to which he will be bound constantly to subordinate his twofold private life, even when his best domestic affections would temporarily suffer in consequence.

* Of the *Société Positiviste*, Paris.

. . . Having already freed yourself from any illusion with respect to savants, you must proceed to emancipate yourself systematically from Science, as well as from Metaphysics and Theology. From the practical point of view which naturally presides over your medical studies, you cannot but feel the emptiness of biological speculations. In reading my recent volume* a second time, you will extend this appreciation to the other and more specious extremity of natural philosophy, and will recognize the very limited power of mathematical conceptions. Without being thus set free from scientific prestige of every kind, you could not preserve the full liberty of mind which the final regeneration demands. All the sciences have value only as preparing the study of human nature. Even this can be truly systematised only by connecting it with its practical destination for the improvement of man; everything else is vanity. . . .

We must regard physicians, especially in France, as the only *class* in which Positivism admits of truly collective successes, though it may bear fruit in individual cases in all the other existing professions before it is established in the two great social bodies—women and workingmen, on which it will exercise its most important influence, though hitherto it has little affected them. . . .

* *Synthèse Subjective*, vol. i.

*TO THE SAME.**15 Homer, 69 (12th February, 1857).*

I BELIEVE I ought briefly to call your attention, as I did that of our brethren at our last meeting, to the practical importance of the habitual subordination of private acts to public needs—a truth much overlooked at a time when anarchy gives a free course to the most vulgar impulses, though no one ventures to dispute in principle the rightful preponderance of the more social motives of action. True believers will soon feel themselves bound to furnish to the priesthood the information as to persons, without which its influence would be too uncertain. You know how the Catholic regime was once seconded by the communications rightly made by domestics with respect to their masters, and even the mutual explanations of friends or relations. Never was a system of political police so effectively carried out, at scarcely any cost, as in 1793, when, under the irresistible impulse of public necessities, all true patriots considered it their duty to make known to the chiefs of the State such facts as could usefully enlighten their conduct. Though it would always be necessary to guard against the abuses to which such a practice would be liable, we must yet regard it as eminently social, its discontinuance being due only to the indifference for the

general interest arising from the total absence of real convictions. Besides, it is easy for chiefs, whether spiritual or temporal, to distinguish in such cases motives essentially personal from those which are truly social. . . .

As to the emancipation from Science specially prescribed, though in a latent form, in my last volume, with relation to the most decisive case,* we must regard such an enfranchisement as the normal completion of the fundamental evolution characterised by the Law of the Three States. The last state must, for this purpose, be decomposed into its two successive modes, the one scientific, the other philosophic—respectively analytic and synthetic. It is only to the second that we can rightly give the epithet *definitive*, at first confusedly applied to both. At bottom, *Science*, properly so called, is as really preliminary as are Theology and Metaphysics, and must be, like them, finally eliminated by the universal Religion, with respect to which these three preambles are—one provisional, the next transitional, and the third preparatory. I venture even to refuse to the Sciences the attribute of full positivity, which consists not merely in the *reality* of speculations, but in the continual combination of that quality with *utility*, which always has reference to the Great Being, and can therefore never be fitly appreciated but by means of the entire subjective and relative synthesis. In the final construction,

* Namely, that of mathematics.

the theological commencement of the human preparation has no less efficacy than its scientific termination; if the latter furnishes the outward material, the former supplies a first draft of the internal dispositions, its imaginary character being compensated by its generality, a feature without which true theoretic rationality is impossible.

From a more systematic point of view it may be said that the first life is especially distinguished, in the individual as in the species, by the continued fruitless search for an essentially *objective* synthesis, whilst the second constructs and develops the purely *subjective* synthesis for which the other has prepared the necessary materials. Even when Science has become aware of the inanity of *causes*, and gradually establishes the reign of *laws*, it aspires, as much as Theology and Metaphysics, to complete objectivity, dreaming of a universal explanation of outward things by means of a single law as absolute as gods and entities, in accordance with the academic utopia. In this respect I must declare myself open to just criticism in relation to my fundamental work, in which, were it but on this ground, posterity will see, as I now frankly admit, only a preliminary construction, a work of the first life, tending towards the second only in the closing volume, all the rest being more or less subject to the prestige of Science, from which the fully religious state has alone freed me.

This leads me to state for you more accurately the

true normal distinction between theory and practice, founded on the best social appreciation of the fundamental division of the Two Powers, as conceived by M. Dunoyer. At bottom, theory and practice can be clearly separated only in relation to the inorganic domain. Beyond cosmology, they are necessarily mixed, though always distinct, like Algebra and Arithmetic. The so-called theoretic power *acts* on man, whilst the purely practical power modifies the material order. In industrial action, the influence of the priesthood is altogether speculative, through the general laws of which it is the normal interpreter. But for human improvement, it is eminently active. Its studies are then subordinated to its destination, according to the axiom, *To know, in order to improve*, which will be the second motto of my next volume, the first being the famous line of Pope—*The proper study of Mankind is Man*, already chosen by Cabanis. Once arrived at Morals, even at its opening biological stage, the Positive conception becomes at once theoretical and practical.

We can thus understand historically the spontaneous restriction of the purely scientific regime to the mathematical and cosmological province, outside of which the physicians have, all along, developed dispositions essentially synthetic, which must now furnish the best support of the universal regeneration. This increasing competition between the physicians and the savants must soon end in rendering the former

capable of gradual incorporation in the Positive priesthood, from which the latter will be excluded as much as the theologians and the metaphysicians. In order to transform themselves in ~~this~~ way, the physicians now need only carry out consistently their synthetic tendencies, by ceasing to aim at a corporeal synthesis apart from the cerebral synthesis, and recognising the entire indivisibility of the subjective systematisation. We must soon look for this last step in advance from such physicians as are complete Positivists. Your letters confirm my hope that you will take a leading place among the inaugurators of this new art of medicine, capable of immediate incorporation in the priesthood of Humanity.

TO THE SAME.

27 Aristotle, 69 (14th March, 1857).

. . . YOU have recognised the truth, that Science, far from constituting the Positive state, can only furnish to it, after Theology and Metaphysics, a last necessary preparation, which, like the two others, has its inconveniences as well as its advantages, and becomes profoundly detrimental when it continues too long. To characterise the *positivity* of our conceptions, there must always be in them a combination of *reality* with *utility*, and this last can be rightly judged only

from the religious point of view, on the ground of the relation of each part to the whole. Science would be less fit than Theology to constitute a fixed state, for the understanding could never take for a residence what is only a ladder, proper for ascending or descending between the world and man when our needs require it, but not at all capable of forming a permanent dwelling. It is time that true theoreticians should free themselves, in this respect, from a degrading domination, so as to be able to instal the great religious notions, against which Science will soon show a more determined resistance than Theology and Metaphysics, because it is more strongly bent on maintaining the spiritual interregnum. . . .

I send you the plan of my treatise on *Positive Morals*. You will remark that, in the second part, I carry back education to the period of conception, so as to include the foetal state, thus giving a larger sphere for the presiding care of the mother, and for the social influence which is transmitted through her.

. . . I must now give you some account of the memorable embassy of M. Sabatier to the Chief of the Jesuits, which was carried out at Rome on 1st Aristotle. My eminent envoy has recently sent me an excellent narrative of this affair, which was read at the Positivist Society on the 11th of March, and which I shall publish hereafter in the Preface to my *Appeal to the Ignatians*.

Acting rather as a Missionary than as an Ambassador, as even the temporal organs of Positivism must do, he nobly prepared his special mission by an admirable letter of a general kind, of which he has sent me a literal copy, on the doctrine in whose name he addresses the Head of the Jesuits. He has principally described it as placing *dignity in submission, happiness in obedience, and liberty in devotedness*. But all this made, at least in appearance, no impression on his interlocutor, who was not the General himself, but his subordinate in charge of French affairs, who had been specially appointed by M. Beckx for this exceptional conference, which thus remained, for the present, preliminary only. As yet incapable of becoming a true Ignatian, which must be the result of Positivist influence under the pressure of events, the Jesuit chief ingenuously abdicated any real pretension to spiritual power by repeatedly saying—"We are poor members of a religious Order, strangers to politics. We cannot accept any league which has not for its direct object the triumph of the name of Jesus. We know that European order may be gravely troubled ; but we can do nothing in such case but submit to be massacred in the name of Jesus. Let us be friends, acting each in his own way." You see that Positivism is henceforth without any competitor in the intellectual and moral reorganisation of the West. My eminent delegate has made the Jesuits involuntarily feel, in this first official contact of

the only two organic churches, the superiority, not only intellectual, but moral, of the new faith, as regards generosity of sentiment, unselfishness in conduct, and even politeness in manner. At the same time, such a trial places in a strong light the admirable completeness of the Positivist conversion of the young apostle, who, only three years since, was a thorough revolutionist.

In my immediate reply, whilst congratulating M. Sabatier, I dissuaded him from any further attempt at present, unless the Jesuit Chief should address him, which seems improbable, though our formal proposal has not yet been even stated. I have only sent to M. Sabatier for M. Beckx copies of the *Positivist Catechism* and the *Appeal to Conservatives*, along with my eighth *Circular*. We shall see whether this presentation leads to any further contacts.

TO THE SAME.

4 Archimedes, 69 (29th March, 1857).

YOUR prompt and touching reply, received yesterday morning, to my exceptional letter of Tuesday, indicates an exact harmony between your filial disposition and the well-merited fatherly affection which I feel for you as one of my best disciples. Having had to rely on public life as a compensation for the entire insufficiency and the bitter disappointments of my private

life, I have in the end obtained more than I had at first hoped for, since already, in my sixtieth year, there is provided for me a treasure of objective affection, on which I can depend as unalterable. Though the number of my true disciples is not considerable, I have some difficulty in enumerating them distinctly, when, every morning, at the close of my principal prayer, I contemplate the subjective picture in which for more than a year I view them as all assembled in the one dwelling (unvisited by you) with which are associated all my memories of my native place. This precious group, in which all my family, as well subjective as objective, is daily present to my heart, forms the best acquisition which has hitherto resulted from the whole of my career. If I live as long as Fontenelle, this recompense will be greatly increased, and will offer to me a fitting presentiment of Posterity, for which I have always worked, at first spontaneously, and afterwards systematically. It can alone counterbalance the growing contempt which I feel for the mass of my contemporaries. I love and pity the crowd, whom I serve without esteeming them, in view of the deplorable support which, from bad motives, as well as mental incompetence, they voluntarily give to their unworthy guides. . . .

You have shown your usual readiness in apprehending my philosophical suggestions, by seizing my view as to the true systematic starting-point of education, which cannot become fully normal, unless we recur to

the period of conception, so as to embrace the foetal age. All the other phases of human life have been more or less the object of special care, whilst this has never attracted regular solicitude even on the part of mothers, though it must certainly have a greater effect than any other on our entire evolution, especially—as you justly think—up to the end of mature manhood.

I fully agree with you in the bitter reflections suggested by our recent Roman contact with the best remains of the old priesthood. Information which has come to me from Mr. Congreve, and which deserves my confidence, satisfies me that we must abandon the hope of a spontaneous regeneration which I had indulged in the case of the leaders of the British Aristocracy. But if the present temporal chiefs are as much below their social mission as the pretended spiritual directors, that must only increase the zeal and the confidence of good Positivists, by showing them more clearly the opportuneness of their supreme intervention to furnish, alike to order and to progress, the only organs which can be really effective, and whose action will be everywhere respected under the growing pressure of the Western situation. Whilst the least backward portion of the Catholic clergy felt itself involuntarily subjugated by Positivism at Rome, our faith was receiving at Paris a decisive sanction from the most advanced of the political adventurers who will govern France till we appear on the temporal stage. This was the

issue of an important interview which I had on the 23rd of February with M. Vieillard,* whom I visited, after an interval of two years, to protest against the strange refusal of the French Customs to admit the second edition of M. de Constant's little work.†

When I had, in the first place, received full satisfaction on this subject, the conversation turned on the present state of things, especially in France. I then learned that Positivism was already regarded, by all the serious men in our Government, as the only possible guide in the near future, even in politics. Our dictator has now read the decisive proposal which I solemnly addressed to him at the end of my *Appeal to Conservatives*; it struck him much, though I have reason to fear that he is not profiting by it, more by reason of his egoism than his superficiality. But I took the opportunity of conveying to him indirectly my view that the measure I recommend,‡ though it must be regretted that it is not at once realised, is yet always opportune so long as it is not the result of a forced concession. The want of security is so much felt that this measure, provided its adoption is really free, will be everywhere hailed with satisfaction, however late may be the date of its announcement. As systematic organ of Posterity, I have represented the

* A member of the Senate, of whom Comte speaks as "my earliest adherent." Louis Napoleon had been his pupil.

† "Réflexions Synthétiques."

‡ Namely, to proclaim himself Perpetual President of the French Republic, with power to name his successor.

grave censure which will await the present dictator if he does not secure the future, as he has adequately guaranteed the present. I have ascertained that neither on his part nor on that of his wife does any illusion exist as to the pretended solution officially reserved for their child. . . .

The two proletariates, whose union is most important for the Occidental reorganisation, are the French and the English. . . .

TO THE SAME.

23 Archimedes, 69 (17th April, 1857).

YOUR interesting letter of Monday, received the day before yesterday, concurs independently with other recent manifestations in indicating the near approach of the poetic phase of Positivism. From London, from Edinburgh, New York, Rome, and Marseilles have come decisive declarations, confirming my conviction, already formed from conversations in Paris, as to the full adoption and the active efficacy of my final conception of the religious triumvirate.* The prompt and complete success of so fundamental an institution proves, beyond my expectations, its perfect opportuneness for chosen souls suitably prepared. If my first great work† manifests

* Space, Earth, Humanity.

† The *Philosophie Positive*.

the philosophical superiority of Positivism, my principal construction* establishes its moral and social pre-eminence, whilst my final composition† will now reveal its poetic excellence: a combination which leaves no uncertainty with respect to the incomparable plenitude of the Religion of Humanity. Though it cannot be my province to develop, in a truly decisive way, this last aptitude of the universal doctrine, I shall have sufficiently laid its systematic foundations: and I already find eminent disciples disposed to move in this direction, which will be more efficacious than any other for our installation in the Western world. . . .

Whatever may be the final forms of our public worship, I have reason to feel assured that she, to whom I owe an incomparable inspiration, will be chosen, as she has been in my private devotions, to personify the Great Being; and this expectation constitutes, as you say, the chief recompense of my labours. . . .

The excellent additional letter which I have had from my eminent Roman disciple informs me of the unexpected reception which the General of the Ignatians has, in the end, accorded to the presentation I told you of, though I feared that the Papal Customs might intercept its transmission by post. His written thanks have been quite courteous towards

* The *Politique Positive*.† The *Synthèse Subjective*.

M. Sabatier and me ; while we now entertain the hope that the *Positivist Catechism* and the *Appeal to Conservatives* will be seriously read at the Jesuit centre. This nascent negotiation is not, then, as yet adjourned to an indefinite future, as I at first feared ; and perhaps the reading of these books may strike the present chiefs of Catholicism sufficiently to induce them to utilise the sojourn at Rome of my excellent envoy, without waiting for the publication, in 1863, of my *Appeal to the Ignatians*, which will contain in its Preface M. Sabatier's admirable first Report.

TO THE SAME.

15 Cæsar, 69 (7th May, 1857).

. . . A SOUL so distinguished as yours intellectually and morally required only a statement, with reasons given, to correct the historical exaggeration in your late poetic project, in which the essentially statical nature of the normal worship of Humanity was entirely overlooked. To confirm you in recognising this great condition, I invite you to remark that, in all the provisional religions, the promised beatitude is always characterised by a state so fixed that in it *time* will no longer exist, which signifies that there will be for it no future, because the present, being fully satisfactory, will be connected only with the

past which prepared it. My recent volume already suggests that the notion of *progress* is essentially proper to the preliminary evolution, the second life admitting, individually and collectively, simply a continuous improvement, which will be increasingly insensible, to such a degree as to tend to entire immobility : such is the only normal term of human aspirations under any regime.

With respect to your general appreciation—a radically sound one—of the religious league, the importance of which you are alone in fully estimating, you must conceive more correctly the true character of such an alliance, in which the presidency must belong to Positivism alone, and yet the necessary independence of every element must be respected. The reconciliation of these conditions depends on the fact that the Positivists are the portion of the Western public which represents the future, whilst the four monotheisms subordinated to them, Catholicism, Islamism, Judaism, and Protestantism (properly so called), act on souls much more numerous indeed, but much less influential, in which the Past still rules. They will be naturally led to admit our supremacy by the same social impulses which will create in them the desire for such a league, which Positivism alone can institute and maintain, by reason of its spontaneous sympathy with the different elements which could not act together without its presidency. Whilst the League of the sixteenth century was formed only

to combine the different Catholic populations against the imminent invasion of Protestantism, that of the nineteenth will unite all the truly religious elements of Western society against the concert, becoming more and more systematic, of souls radically incapable of discipline, whose social ascendancy would tend to dissolve every religion and, as a consequence, every government. If the former league was unable to last longer than a generation, on account of its inability to achieve its object, the second, too, must act only for a similar time, because that will be quite sufficient for the attainment of its chief end, the decisive preponderance of the religious principle, by the installation of the Positive faith, freely aided by the different decadent systems of belief.

We can already count with confidence on the formation throughout the West of this noble temporary league, because mental and moral anarchy will soon reach such a point that it will attract the continued earnest attention of all worthy souls to the problem of terminating the religious interregnum. I have often declared that we are only at the beginning of this anarchical state, which could not fully develop itself so long as material order was habitually menaced, because the solicitude which such a state of things produces has the effect of suspending men's spiritual dissensions in the presence of a danger felt alike by all. Though material order can only be preserved by a constant recourse to artificial expedients, which

leave the public still in dread of its speedy dissolution, its maintenance is assured (except so far as transient storms may disturb it) by the indefatigable vigilance of the different Governments, which, especially at the centre, labour, with a success deserving all our gratitude, to suppress within and without the practical results of the anarchical tendencies, which it is not their office to treat directly. In consequence of this persistent surveillance, which forms the chief difference between the statesmen of the nineteenth and those of the eighteenth century, material quiet is sufficiently secured to admit of the full development of spiritual disorder. And this has already proceeded so far as to trouble the social relations even in the bosom of families by a dissolving action, which will soon force civil governments, conscious of their own impotence, to second the religious reorganisation. It is from the free development of these radical disturbances that soon will more and more arise the demand for the Holy League of the nineteenth century. Of this demand many will be unconscious who will afterwards become the most devoted members of the League especially if my disciples know how to take the initiative naturally belonging to their systematic state which hitherto has been essentially sterile for want of heart and character.

TO THE SAME.

8 St. Paul, 69 (28th May, 1857).

IN reading your letter of Sunday, received yesterday morning, I have been specially touched by the noble appreciation of my saintly eternal colleague,* which gives me a foretaste of the final judgment of Posterity regarding her. I have been of late perfectly assured on this subject by recognising that her moral glorification is irrevocably bound up with the intellectual conviction of the immense superiority of my *Politique* over my *Philosophie*. In order better to measure this decisive superiority, I have read during the last few days the best part of the *Philosophie Positive*—namely, the last three chapters containing the general conclusions, which I had never looked at for fifteen years. Besides their moral dryness, which made me read immediately a canto of *Ariosto* to restore my tone, I profoundly felt their mental inferiority in relation to the true philosophic point of view at which the heart has completely established me. No competent thinker can now fail to see this contrast, nor consequently forget the angelic influence which produced it by an action all whose essential steps can be already appreciated.

* Madame Clotilde de Vaux.

I cannot have a better opportunity than the present for communicating to you my final judgment, which will be solemnly given in my autobiography, but which is already in circulation during the last six months among my Parisian disciples. It is this, that though I was bound to deliver, and even to write, my, *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, I ought not to have published it till the end of my career, and then as a purely historical document, along with my personal volume of 1864. The preparation which it accomplished was really indispensable ; but I might and ought to have withheld it from the public. The march of Positivism would certainly have been firmer and more rapid, if I had manifested myself directly by my *Politique Positive*, after my moral regeneration, in a manner fully conformable to my fundamental opus-cules,* which pointed directly to my social destination, without giving rise to an intermediate intellectual position which now creates, especially in England, a grave hindrance to our religious installation.

This original mistake has left behind it no lasting compensation but that of marking more distinctly the profound philosophic reaction due to the spontaneous ascendancy of my incomparable patroness ; in this sense I have nothing to regret. No one expects me to judge my own career with such severity, yet it is not at all exaggerated. If the so-called intellectual

* These are published in the Appendix to vol. iv. of the *Politique Positive*.

Positivism creates so much embarrassment, it is I myself who must be blamed for the apparent strength which its wretched adherents would never have acquired without the systematic support which they seem to find in my first great work. Hence I have for some years sought to discountenance the reading of it by my new disciples, as it is to it that my old ones owe their chief imperfections. . . .

In your intended communication with the local Jesuits, . . . I advise you to represent Positivism as condensed in the utopia of the Virgin-Mother, which must attract to us the special attention of all worthy Catholics of both sexes. . . .

TO THE SAME.

5 Charlemagne, 69 (22nd June, 1857).

. . . I MUST take steps to check the deluge of General Expositions of Positivism with which we are now threatened. As easy as they are useless, they really only satisfy the puerile vanity of their (so-called) *authors* ; they do not even furnish any guarantee of the convictions set forth in them ; for the present studies of our youth, especially in the Polytechnic, are apt to produce a fatal facility in explaining what the writer does not understand. Besides the service rendered by particular applications in supplying new

secondary developments of Positivism, they guarantee better the reality of the convictions expressed, because the writer puts something of *his own* into them. The so-called General Expositions are valuable only as *public acts of faith*, the efficacy of which depends on the social weight of the proselyte, as in the noble cases of M. de Constant and M. Sabatier. . . . Positivism, in order to a truly decisive propaganda, must be presented on its moral, rather than its intellectual, side. . . .

TO THE SAME.

12 Charlemagne, 69 (29th June, 1857).

. . . WHEN we place ourselves at the true social point of view without attributing too much importance to intellectual differences, we see that there are at present, as all along, and now more than ever, at bottom only two parties, that of order and that of disorder—Conservatives and Revolutionists; those who sincerely desire to terminate the Occidental anarchy, and those whose secret wish is to perpetuate it, in order to avoid a spiritual discipline from which they seek indefinitely to withdraw their personal, domestic, and civic conduct. The chiefs of the latter party feel that the metaphysical doctrine on which they have founded their subversive tendencies, is radically exhausted; they begin to suspect that Positivism has a great future before it, and recognise the need of

wearing its colours, in order successfully to impede the reconstruction they dread in an age which is necessarily organic in character. In England, where official opinion represents the British medium as preserved from the present revolution by the previous establishment of the Anglican dynasty, these plausible schemers have openly taken the name of *Intellectual Positivists* ; they adopt my *Philosophic Positive* as affording a pretext for rejecting my *Politique*, which makes me the more regret, not having written, but having published my preparatory work, thus made the systematic prop of a culpable intrigue. But in France, though the fundamental disposition is essentially similar, the situation makes it necessary to profess an interest in the social destination of Positivism, and accordingly false Positivists must henceforth pretend to adopt the Religion of Humanity; but they strive to prolong the spiritual interregnum by postponing the formation of the regenerating priesthood, and even seeking to divide it by a committee without recognising it in a pontiff. . . . But all this comes too late; and we can allow these anarchical plots to develop themselves freely. . . . Nothing but an immediate death could prevent the *Founder of the Universal Religion* from becoming at once, on that ground alone, without any direct claim, *High-Priest of Humanity*. To make this plain, my annual circular will for the future be signed with both these titles, and that is all the Littré coterie will have gained.

*TO HENRY EDGER.**20 Dante, 66 (4th August, 1854).*

. . . THE mental environment which you describe so well [as surrounding you in the United States], exhibits the full development of the Occidental anarchy. But I see with satisfaction that it does not affright you. You seem to me to have rightly appreciated the germs of reorganisation which it offers, and the cultivation of which is reserved for you. Like you, I prefer this complete and systematic individualism to the vague socialism which, without being more reasonable, becomes more oppressive. So long as this breach with the present, and still more with the past, remains essentially a matter of the intellect, it is, I believe, quite capable of being surmounted by the organic doctrine under the influence of the domestic affections and of practical activity. And therefore, I share your hopes as to the possibility of finding before long, in the most unregulated of social mediums, the nucleus of a true Positive Church. We must regard as incurable only men without heart and without character.

However troubled may be the minds of others, you ought to undertake with confidence the work of healing them, which is at present the special office of Positivism. All souls which have given, even by their

extravagances, real proofs of devotedness and energy, are fully accessible to the religion of Humanity. When they have been regenerated, their moral worth will be further developed by devoting themselves in a right spirit to the spiritual or temporal government of a world which they at first disturbed.

In this transformation, in which feeling is your best reliance, you ought to count above all things on the influence of women. . . .

Your labours for the regeneration of others, and your private scientific studies should not interfere with the work of your special profession. Every Positivist must show by his conduct, that his faith, instead of turning him away from his civic office, disposes him to fill it better. I also infer from your letter that you feel the importance of æsthetic culture, which is naturally connected with the due appreciation of the female sex.

What you say of the Catholic worship satisfies me that you are quite free from irreligious or metaphysical prejudices. But I think the medium you live in would not admit of the attempt you suggest, wanting—as it does—the corresponding beliefs. It is not by the Mass that the Catholic *cultus* can serve as a preparation for the Positive adoration. The transition will be better made through the worship of the Virgin, who furnishes to Spanish and Italian souls a spontaneous idealisation of Humanity, by the apotheosis of Woman. It would, I believe, be possible

to compose, especially in Italian, with appropriate music, a real Positivist Office of the Virgin, which would be very useful in preparing the final worship. But such a transformation is better adapted to South than to North America. This project then, in my judgment, whilst it does honour to your feelings, would fail in your present surroundings. . . .

TO THE SAME.

20 Frederic, 66 (24th November, 1854).

. . . I CANNOT adopt your project of a sort of Positivist monastery. It seems to me directly opposed to the development of the domestic affections, which our religion regards as the necessary foundation of social existence. If amongst the exceptional men who surround you, some, weary of their isolation, feel a vague impulse to come together, it is far better that this pressure should push them towards family life, than that they should seek an illusory satisfaction by instituting a system the real advantages of which would be merely material. As to the utility of thus providing a place of refuge for persecuted Positivists, such a scheme would be little in harmony with the spirit of our religion. Besides that nothing points to such vexations as would force any of us to exile, we ought to regard it as an obligation not to abandon

the post at which Humanity, by the whole of its antecedents, has placed us, and from which each of us can alone derive all the power for useful action which is allowed us. Positivism is not chiefly intended for exceptional or factitious natures and situations. Whilst capable of application to all cases, it ought to be principally developed in the present and normal centres of human population, which must necessarily be the scenes of its operation.

In general, you must avoid attaching too much importance to the anomalous class with which you have now to deal. I calculate that in the best mediums Positivism must not aspire to convert more than *a thousandth part* of the present generation, the immense majority of which will be sacrificed, given up to empirical oscillations between anarchy and retrogression. Such a proportion, however, of regenerated souls will fully suffice for the Occidental solution, because this small number will govern the majority. But true conversions must be particularly rare in the more disordered environment which is round you at present. The successes which you may obtain there have nevertheless much value, as proving the efficacy of the Positive religion even in the most unfavourable cases. Still their principal importance must lie in recommending our faith to Conservatives, who everywhere, and especially in the United States, are naturally the best adherents of Positivism. From amongst them came the noble Horace B. Wallace (of

Philadelphia), whom we lost prematurely at the end of 1852, and who, in his memorable visit of 1851, sought to invoke the aid of the Positivist faith against the imminent invasion of American anarchy.

A more special appreciation of this destination should already lead you to direct your proselytism chiefly to women, by making them feel the moral resources and the social guarantees which our religion can supply. They must be thoroughly tired of the dryness of Protestantism and Deism, in spite of the empty attraction offered them by theological interpretation and the doctoral attitude; and this weariness must be felt even by those of them who renounce the natural privileges of women to aspire to the disastrous equality of the sexes which is now in vogue. . . .

TO THE SAME.

15 Aristotle, 67 (12th March, 1855).

. . . THE little work* of which you speak as in course of composition seems very well conceived for adapting Positivism to your special medium by utilising the confused aspirations which are vaguely formulated amongst those who surround you. I

* This refers to the pamphlet by Mr. Edger, entitled "Modern Times, the Labour Question, and the Family." "Modern Times" was the name of a social settlement on Long Island.

would therefore encourage you to proceed with the execution of this judicious undertaking ; but I invite you to complete in two essential respects your sound appreciation of the industrial constitution as we conceive it. You must first give due prominence to the doctrine of the gratuity of labour, which marks the character of altruistic industry, and founds the positive theory of wages, which are destined only to renew materials, whether the provisions consumed, or the instruments worn out, during practical operations. In the second place, you ought to mention the rule—*Man must support woman*, as the principal basis of the determination of wages and the essential ground for securing their partial fixity. If these two principles are suitably co-ordinated with those you refer to, your little work, thus completed, may certainly be very useful, and that not only in your present medium but in France, when translated with a more general title. . . .

. . . The names of children ought to be selected by preference from those in the months of St. Paul and Charlemagne in our Calendar, moral types being commonly insufficient outside the Middle Ages. . . .

TO THE SAME.

11 Dante, 67 (26th July, 1855).

. . . THE precious passages which you quote from the letters of your recently converted friend [Mr.

John Metcalf] have recalled to me the noble attitude of Cromwell's best soldiers, who combined religious enthusiasm with political activity. This similarity of character, which is not at all accidental, indicates the tendency of Positivism to develop the normal filiation between the French and the English revolutions. Forgotten or suppressed in its proper seat, the latter movement is not truly appreciated except under the impulse emanating from the former, in the new synthesis, which can alone duly honour Cromwell and his fellow-workers. But North America having been chiefly colonised by them, their descendants must still be there, and will soon accept our religion as realising the regeneration to which they have not ceased to look forward, though they have had no opportunity of manifesting these dispositions except in the struggle for independence. Under this aspect, Positivism must find amongst the workingmen of America the best promoters of the regeneration of the British proletariat, too much repressed in the mother country by aristocratic domination and the Anglican hypocrisy. Utilising with zeal and wisdom the American situation, the apostles of Positivism can reanimate those special tendencies, so as to create a profound impression of the radical connection between the "old cause" in England, and the religious renovation now at work in Paris.

Your quotations have fully satisfied me in another important respect, by showing that the affinity between

Positivism and Catholicism is rightly appreciated by our true believers. I am not surprised that genuinely religious souls, like Mr. Metcalf and you, having escaped from the dryness of Protestantism, should seek in the Catholic churches a provisional equivalent for the Positivist temples which we do not yet possess, by developing there the aptitude of the Virgin Mother to represent Humanity. This affinity, which will soon be everywhere felt, ought to show itself first in the midst of the anarchy of America, where Catholicism, purged of its vicious aspirations after domination, recommends itself chiefly by its worship, which, till our advent, was alone fit to direct the habitual expansion of feeling.

My *Appeal to Conservatives*, now completed, and shortly to be printed, points to the religious alliance between Positivism and Catholicism, which such indications as I have mentioned show to be highly opportune. In considering how to conduct the important co-operation in this holy league which will belong to you, you will be led to feel the special importance of proper contacts with the Jesuits, who have, I presume, the principal share in directing the Catholic movement in America. You will also feel that their successes prepare ours, inasmuch as conversions of Protestants to Catholicism are, at bottom, the best roads to Positivism, which can alone satisfy the moral wants which give rise to these transformations. Besides, Catholic contacts ought to assist you

to propagate our religion in South America, and, first of all, in Mexico, where, according to information received from a Positivist who has travelled there lately, women and priests will welcome it. The addition of the name of the admirable Indian woman Marina to the Positivist Calendar as adjunct of Joan of Arc ought to furnish, at the right time, a germ of some adhesions amongst the unfortunate native Mexican race, who will thus be led to feel that they are thought of at Paris. A doctrine, all the parts of which are mutually dependent, affords the means of making way everywhere, by connecting with the whole each part which appeals to any special locality, as we may see in particular with respect to Spanish America, as regards the marriage of priests, which is universally desired there, whilst Positivism is alone fitted to institute it aright.

The great importance which you and Mr. Metcalf attach to the daily practice of private personal prayer proves to me the completeness of your regeneration; for public and even domestic worship would lose their chief moral action, and would do no more than produce æsthetic impressions, if they did not derive from this basis a real affective efficacy. We shall soon distinguish among Positivists those who sufficiently practise personal worship, as alone fitted to develop the social ascendancy of our faith in the sceptical medium which it must rule in order to regenerate it. I am thus led to congratulate you on the happy improvement which

you have spontaneously introduced—that namely of completing the general anxiety for self-purification by a special attention on each day of the week to a particular personal instinct. Adopting, in my own practice, this useful development, I recognise in it a special proof of the depth and sincerity of your faith, as well as of the reality of the high hopes I have formed of you as an Apostle of Positivism.

Your touching remarks on your material position lead me to advise you with paternal earnestness to neglect nothing that can aid you in procuring for your wife a dwelling more worthy of her and of yourself. The habitual privations you have long had to endure increase my affectionate esteem for you both. But it is an urgent duty for you to prevent their longer continuance.

TO THE SAME.

26 Descartes, 67 (2nd November, 1855).

. . . WITH respect to the different projects you mention of a critical publication, I recommend you to renounce them altogether. As Positivists must now direct the organic movement, they must always reserve to themselves the initiative, and never leave it to incompetent thinkers. However solid might be your refutation of the anarchical sophisms that surround

you, you would spend on them time and strength that merit better employment. You owe to the public only an indirect and implicit criticism, resulting from the natural contrast between the general or special exposition of the organic synthesis, and the confused development of subversive utopias. It is only in conversation or in some incidental phrases of a treatise not controversial, that you could usefully mark the Positive side of such wild conceptions. For that they do present such a side you are right in believing ; every opinion which has even transiently united honest, though misguided, souls must have some real ground which can be appreciated by the synthesis destined to realise all programmes whilst rectifying them. . . .

TO THE SAME.

3 Archimedes, 68 (27th March, 1856).

. . . It is chiefly by contrast and diversion that Positivism treats moral maladies, developing altruism in order to surmount egoism, which Catholicism, not consecrating the culture of sympathy, sought only to restrain directly—a method which often produced the contrary effect, according to the remark in the *Imitation*, “The anxiety to avoid it even makes us run into it.” Coming to regulate human life by

making the improvement of the feelings its great occupation, we are certain of ultimate success if we make our own lives the first and permanent object of the regime we preach. If we do not offer this decisive evidence, the public will hold our doctrine responsible for our personal wrong-doings, though its moral superiority is now as thoroughly—nay, even more clearly—established than its mental superiority, which has already been recognised by the best intellects.

TO THE SAME.

10 Charlemagne, 68 (26th June, 1856).

. . . MY *Appeal to Conservatives* has determined the proper attitude of Positivists at the present time ; they must be devoted exclusively to the work of spiritual reorganisation, until Governments, especially that of France, transmit power to our statesmen, when they have been recognised as alone able to surmount Communism in its fully developed form. Till then, we must not only keep clear of political agitation, but also dissuade others from it as far as possible, and always incline to the systematic consolidation of authority, in whatever hands it may reside, because views of the future cannot be appreciated by those who have no security for the present. Between

governors and the governed, our attitude, as organs of the future deduced from the past, must be in harmony with the formula by which I have characterised it—"Conciliatory in act, inflexible in principle."

We announce it as our mission to regulate human life, private and public, in the name of Humanity, on the ground of two general facts which the situation is more and more bringing to light—on the one hand, the need of such regulation, and, on the other, the impotence for this purpose of all the commonly accepted doctrines. The fitness of ours for the task is fully established in principle for everyone who is willing and competent to judge its intrinsic merits. To us it belongs, by the excellence of our public and private conduct, to prove its efficacy to empirical but impartial spectators, so as to win for it, ere long, an irresistible ascendancy in a medium which, by reason of its anarchical condition, cannot successfully resist profound and complete convictions; for such a result the representatives of our faith need not be numerous, provided they are sufficiently devoted. We must replace the fanaticism for opinions not admitting of discussion, which is now extinct amongst metaphysicians no less than theologians, by the enthusiasm inspired by doctrines capable of demonstration. This spirit is the habitual symptom which must secure for us, in the eyes of all, the presidency of the future, in a situation where Positivism alone can inspire an active and permanent devotion. . . .

TO THE SAME.

17 Frederic, 68 (20th November, 1856).

. . . I CANNOT approve of the qualification of *Catholic* which you have sometimes applied to the new Church. Though no doctrine can compete with ours in respect to universality, we must leave to terms in habitual use their commonly accepted signification without going back to their etymological meaning. Instead of conciliation, the practice against which I advise you would really produce only confusion. We might intellectually describe ourselves as *relativists*, and socially as *universalists*, since these are the two principal attributes of our faith. But we must always restrict ourselves to the title of *Positivists*, in which we shall in the end oblige the Western public to condense all the characteristics of our religion. . . .

. . . Nothing so profound and decisive as your last Essay* had previously appeared on the subject of Positivism. With M. de Constant's *Réflexions* and Mr. Congreve's *Gibraltar*, it makes the present year an important one in the eyes of all true Positivists. . . .

. . . The medium in which you live enables you to feel more deeply that the Occidental revolution needs

* "The Positivist Calendar, with a brief exposition of religious Positivism," 1856.

above all things a religious solution. The American situation is fitted to dissipate the illusions which maintain the continued empirical confidence of the European socialists in remedies essentially political in character. Having got rid of royalty, of an army, of a legally established clergy, your *Yankees*, and still more the observers from Europe settled among them, should be easily brought to understand that religion can alone realise the social aspirations which they feel as keenly as the Europeans who seek to satisfy them by fruitless political alterations. Besides its special and direct action on patricians and workingmen, it must soon reach the most respectable and solid part of the population of the United States—that which preserves the traditions of Cromwell's republicans, the first colonists of the northern part of the Union.

TO THE SAME.

9 Archimedes, 69 (3rd April, 1857).

. . . POSITIVISM encourages only the altruistic instincts, and represses all the egoistic inclinations. It comes to regulate irresistibly human life, public and private, in the midst of the universal anarchy. Its true adherents must expect the most violent animosity from all those who, chiefly amongst literary men and the middle classes, wish to prolong indefinitely the

spiritual interregnum, so as to perpetuate the absence of moral discipline. I know that you have wisely put aside any illusion in this matter, and have nobly resolved to pay no serious attention to attacks which it is easy to foresee. They will soon show themselves, now that the conspiracy of silence has been essentially surmounted. We must everywhere be prepared for the most ignoble calumnies, without allowing them to interfere with our labours, letting our lives, public and private, answer for us to souls really capable of judging.

But though, living habitually with our ancestors and our descendants, you may disdain our contemporaries, you cannot equally disregard disappointments resulting from the defects of your own present brethren. I do not here speak of pretended Positivists, very numerous in the United States as in England, who regret my *Politics* whilst accepting my *Philosophy*; these must soon become our principal enemies, as I long since announced. The only really bitter disappointments are those which arise from the conduct of complete, that is to say, religious Positivists, whose *intellects* reject none of our dogmas, nor even of our practices or rules, but whose *hearts* have not regenerated their *habits*. However painful the shocks this insufficiency must cause you, you ought not to attribute it to the imperfections of individuals, but rather view it as an incoherence due to the generation in which Positivism arose. I have been specially troubled

by it, in consequence of the negative habits which were inherent in the centre where the new doctrine appeared, and where the influence of the eighteenth century had tended to produce moral dryness, whilst exalting the intellectual movement. An absolute *emancipation*, which was suitable only for such as could take a part in the introduction of the universal synthesis, was extended without distinction to all Westerns, especially in France, so as to lead to the general neglect of any cultivation of the feelings. It was, nevertheless, in such a medium that Positivism had to arise, so that its adherents have, up to the present, commonly proceeded from a mass incapable of discipline, in which will be found the principal obstacle to its early ascendancy.

If you have paid the due attention to the precious exception offered by my noble disciple Lonchampt, you will have remarked that he passed directly from Catholicism without having occupied an intermediate position in the ranks of Scepticism. Though he was specially endowed by nature, several of his brethren would perhaps have satisfied me as well, had they been, like him, preserved from the fatality which now condemns young French thinkers to pass through several years of entire indiscipline, whence results at a later stage the usual discordance between their hearts and their intellects, notwithstanding the most complete and stable convictions. You will find less difficulty of this kind amongst Positivists who have passed

directly from Protestantism, which, though inferior to Catholicism as a disciplinary influence, maintains some habits of moral culture.

. . . As the Positivist priesthood can never be conferred before the age of forty-two, especially in view of the social maturity with which no personal endowments can adequately dispense, you will have time to complete the encyclopedic course, and so fulfil the conditions of theoretic preparation which will enable you to enter on a career fully in harmony with your cerebral constitution. Your judicious study of my new volume will soon produce upon you the reaction indicated in my last circular, that, namely, of freeing you as entirely from the prestige of science as you already are from the theological and metaphysical yoke. A final and preponderating application of the Law of the Three States to religion, leads us to rise above its scientific preamble as above each of the other two, utilising them all according to their respective natures—real, general, or constructive, and surmounting their respective vices, of uselessness, abstractness, and unreality. . . .

. . . Your noble final appreciation of true Positivism deserves my entire approval. The whole of my mission was announced in my decisive Essay of 1826, in which I devoted my life to the foundation of the new spiritual power. This is what can alone condense and realise the regenerative doctrine which I have fully established. We must regard as a mere chimera

the hope of uniting and guiding men by a faith, however complete and demonstrable, which should not result in the installation of the true priesthood. Such a conclusion must henceforth mark the genuine Positivists; even though the pretended ones should admit all our dogmas, their social action would be essentially fruitless if they did not subordinate themselves to the universal pontiff, the one source of the regenerating group. You ought, at the same time, to bear in mind that, outside of its own bosom, Positivism must soon find a valuable support in the sympathies which its organic aptitude will naturally create in the different Western governments, in proportion as the situation will more and more develop the anarchy which already exists potentially in the souls of our contemporaries. . . .

TO THE SAME.

1 St. Paul, 69 (21st May, 1857).

. . . WE must already regard the fitting establishment of the Holy League of the nineteenth century as the principal enterprise which ought to engage the interest of all true Positivists, whether men of action or speculation. For, since Positivism can at present prevail only with a select minority, its social efficacy would soon prove insufficient without the indirect

assistance of the several decadent faiths, which, by virtue of their general diffusion, can alone enable us to prevent or overcome the combination of anarchical impulses in the masses of the different Occidental populations. Catholicism, in a great degree blinded by official protection, will, I fear, scarcely appreciate such a league till forced by the painful pressure of coming events ; whilst Protestantism, where it is destitute of legal authority, is more likely to act without waiting for this disagreeable necessity. . . .

TO GEORGE JOHNSTON ALLMAN.

26 Caesar, 67 (18th May, 1855).

. . . THE printed documents which you have been good enough to send me, relating to the official plan of scientific studies in England, dispose me to recommend you to be better pleased with the situation than you might be tempted to feel, on comparing your system with ours, spoiled as it has been by the Academic influence, from which you have been preserved. Until the encyclopedic institution of universal education begins to prevail throughout the West, each nation, and particularly yours, will do wisely to retain the system of teaching which has arisen from its whole past, whilst gradually introducing the positivist improvements. . . .

As to your systematic plan for the study of Positivism, in which you tell me you intend to follow religiously the order of my own development, I am convinced that you will thus, in the end, have a more complete and profound knowledge of it than most of my disciples, even those who belong to the speculative class. Not having begun the *Politique Positive* until it was published in its entirety, you will seize it as a whole better than if, like the others, you had read each volume at the time of its appearance. Though

such a reading of the work can be only provisional, people are thus turned away from undertaking a continuous study of it, which could alone be definitive.

I cannot attach serious importance to the meetings which you describe by characteristic quotations. These revolutionary clamours will be easily surmounted at a time when the needs of order tend everywhere more and more to prevail over the instincts of progress. The social agitation will not become serious in England until it presents itself as plainly incompatible with the theological basis on which your aristocracy rests. Now, such an emancipation cannot be effected without anarchy except under the Positivist banner, where nothing is destroyed but by being replaced. Till this flag has been duly raised amongst you, popular manifestations cannot have any efficacy beyond warning the aristocracy as to the dangers of a situation, the direction of which tends to pass into other hands, unless your patricians transform themselves in time. . . .

TO JOHN FISHER.

4 Frederic, 67 (8th November, 1855).

. . . THE principle of conciliation must henceforth direct the conduct of true Positivists towards all our adversaries or incomplete adherents. Our convictions are so thoroughly systematised, that such a spirit of indulgence cannot give rise to any vicious concession, whilst I was obliged to be more inflexible so long as this basis was less firmly established. All men ought to be viewed by us as spontaneously moving towards our faith, from which they are only more or less distant, but so as to be unconsciously on some side or other in real unison with it; and this, in consequence of the indivisibility of our synthesis, wins for us an effectual empire over them to push them forward to the completion of their convictions. . . . A combination of enthusiasm with reflection, ought to become the habitual character of true Positivists in proportion to the growth of fully normal conversions, in which the intellect is guided by the heart. . . .

TO THE SAME.

4 Bichat, 67 (6th December, 1855).

. . . YOUR question as to the green colour of Positivist emblems is answered in the Preliminary Discourse

to the *Politique Positive*. This hue befits the men of the future, as expressing hope, from the recurring announcement which vegetation everywhere furnishes; and at the same time it indicates peace; thus symbolising *peaceful activity*. Historically it inaugurated the French Revolution, since the besiegers of the Bastille wore for the most part, as cockades, simply leaves suddenly plucked from the trees of the Palais Royal, according to the happy suggestion of Camille Desmoulins; although the Orleanists, some days later, on pretexts long since forgotten, procured a preference for the tricolor livery of their dynasty. Besides these reasons, I had to prevent the adoption of red, which in the central nation, and even amongst the other Occidentals, specially marked, as it still does, the sanguinary attitude of the most *arrières* of the revolutionists. Green is therefore suitable as emblem of the true regenerators, whether in the normal state or even during the transition. . . .

TO THE SAME.

§ St. Paul, 68 (22nd May, 1856).

... THERE is a special operation, in which the initiative normally belongs to the representatives of British Positivism—I mean the restoration of Gibraltar to

Spain, suggested in the last volume of my principal work (*Politique Positive*, IV. p. 493). . . . It is time to raise this great question of political morality, the social importance of which is far above any material effects it could have. . . . The wrongful anomaly—as I called it in the passage cited above—of the possession of Gibraltar, which has now lasted for a century and a half, is as vicious as was that of Calais, which continued for two centuries, and which no one would now venture to justify. From the happy joint action which has lately drawn closer the bonds between Western nations, all that disturbs the fraternity of the most advanced populations must be specially felt to require a sincere and speedy reform. But it would be absurd to excite against Gibraltar a coalition such as that which has suppressed Sebastopol, though I am surprised that the Russian Ambassador did not call attention at the late Congress to the similarity of the two cases. Indeed, the case of Gibraltar is more open to censure than that of Sebastopol, because in the former the oppressive fortress is built on foreign soil, so as to constitute a special outrage, as well as a general defiance. This question is so much the more opportune as its solution must be pacific, like all those proposed by Positivism, which systematically condemns any employment of force in social reforms, whether in home or foreign policy. What is required is, therefore, a fitting appeal to the English public for the spontaneous reparation of a national injustice of which true British Socialists

ought to be particularly ashamed. . . . Whilst British Positivists make this special appeal in their own medium, the French Positivists ought to renew theirs for the restitution of Algeria to the Arabs. This double manifestation would be a decisive inauguration of the Positivist diplomacy, characterised by its systematic connection with the Socialist movement towards internal regeneration. The connection is founded on this—that, in order to complain with dignity of being exploited, Progressists must first cease to exploit. Your Aristocracy took precautions against the renewal of the impulses which led to the Cromwellian revolution by offering to the English people the world to pillage or dominate, in order that all classes might be associated with the retrograde tyranny against which they could not thereafter consistently protest. Here in France similar tactics are being attempted by means of the possession of Algeria, which transforms those who are oppressed at home into oppressors abroad. Since nothing has so entire a unity as the domain of morality, we shall easily show the sincere Socialists how important it is that they should clear themselves of tyranny without, in order to secure a regeneration within. But Positivists alone can hold this language, which implies profound and complete convictions founded on a doctrine really capable of application in the broadest way to human affairs.

To THE SAME.

3 Charlemagne, 68 (19th June, 1856).

. . . IT is important for our cause that true Positivists should be generally recognised as exercising their respective professions in a decidedly superior manner. Let their general conduct be at the same time as fully satisfactory as their special services, and this twofold distinction must soon furnish the most effective support of our propaganda.

TO THE SAME.

3 Gutenberg, 68 (14th August, 1856).

. . . So long as we keep clear of affectation, we can only be gainers by introducing precision and regularity, wherever it is possible. Worship, especially private worship, would never be developed and maintained if it were practised only at times when its necessity was specially felt. The occupations of daily life, speculative as well as active, turn away from the performance of acts of this kind everyone who has not made their scrupulous periodical observance a law of his life. . . . I hope to see you take your place among the Positivist physicians who will, throughout the entire West, elevate and discipline their profession

by affiliating it to the priesthood of Humanity. . . . The opinion lately expressed to you with respect to medical teaching in Paris is essentially correct from the critical point of view. All our medical *confrères* are agreed with your countrymen in regretting that our students are not sufficiently trained in hospital work, and particularly that they are not allowed to take any responsibility. This reproach seems to be more or less applicable to all the medical schools of France. . . .

TO THE SAME.

3 Frederic, 68 (6th November, 1856).

. . . POSITIVISM superposes itself on the different provisional faiths with an indulgence at once paternal and filial, without forgetting either their former efficacy, or that which still remains to them for the guidance of the greater part of the present generation.

TO THE SAME.

3 Bichat, 68 (4th December, 1856).

. . . IT is an error to neglect the conversion of Protestants from an exaggerated appreciation of the incontestable superiority which belongs to Catholic converts. Positivism having access at present only

to specially gifted souls, distinctions relative to the masses ought to be in existing conditions regarded as of secondary consequence, though they must soon become important. The regenerative faith has as yet borne fruit only among populations which had been politically subjected to the revolutionary movement—France, Holland, England, and the United States. . . .

TO THE SAME.

19 Moses, 69 (19th January, 1857).

. . . I HAVE for a long time had sad experience of the moral defects observable in the best of the adherents who immediately surround me, arising from their previous too complete and prolonged occupation of the revolutionary stage at a period of life when durable habits are formed. It must really be admitted that Protestantism, by retarding the purely sceptical phase, acts in the same way—though with less energy—as Catholicism, preserving the souls of Westerns from an entire neglect of moral culture. . . . Notwithstanding the paradoxical appearance of such a statement, the affective development is at present further advanced in gifted souls among Hollanders, Englishmen, and Americans than in France and among the southern populations: but the proportion will soon be reversed when Positivism reaches the masses. . . .

Your study of my Introduction to the *Synthèse Subjective* will have familiarised you with my fundamental conception of the systematic incorporation of Fetishism in Positivism, without which the Religion of Humanity cannot fully meet all our wants, moral, theoretic, and even practical. . . .

TO THE SAME.

I Aristotle, 69 (26th February, 1857).

. . . A RECENT incident in our body shows how dangerous it is to form a connection by marriage with a family incurably revolutionary—a type happily restricted to France, and even there rarely extending to women. Under the influence of a father, stupidly devoted to the doctrines of the school of Rousseau, the bride thinks and says that human life has no need of being systematically regulated, and that feeling, by itself, is sufficient for our guidance. Hence she professes only a vague and sterile, or rather perverting deism, which cannot at all admit of a mixed marriage, whilst I should willingly grant it to any woman who was a sincere Catholic, Mussulman, Protestant, or even Jewish, believer. I will henceforth prevent such unions as far as I can, by refusing, at the time of the preliminary betrothal, to marry any Positivist whose bride shall be without a religion. All truly religious

souls must, under our leading, take joint measures to repel unions with such families, which must be reduced to contracting marriages amongst each other, with no tie beyond the municipal ceremony. . . .

TO THE SAME.

1 Archimedes, 69 (26th March, 1857).

. . . THE melancholy case to which my last letter referred ought to seriously forewarn my true disciples against inconsiderate marriages, particularly against an alliance with a thoroughly revolutionary family, a case in which the attraction of a pretended emancipation may often create a hope of conversion to Positivism, which will be less easy and less likely to be effected there than elsewhere. Many worthy Positivists will probably be forced to abide by celibacy, as, notwithstanding its sacrifices and its dangers, preferable to a bad marriage. . . .

TO THE SAME.

2 Cæsar, 69 (24th April, 1857).

. . . THE internal repugnance you describe yourself as having felt for the religious practices of your companion in your recent excursion, or rather those of his family, appears to me to be an unnoticed remaining trace of habits contracted during your sceptical

phase. You have thus allowed too much ascendancy to the intellect, and have not sufficiently respected the needs of the heart, which must always have the foremost place with every true Positivist. Even in its most imperfect forms, religion necessarily tends to regulate human life, principally by the cultivation of the feelings. However unenlightened this cultivation may be, those who practise it sincerely are much more praiseworthy, as well as happier, than the revolutionaries who now allow it to fall into entire desuetude. Our summing-up of human evolution, whether individual or collective, in the law, "Man becomes more and more religious," must always be the formula which will characterise our conduct, private and public.

Since I finished the *Politique Positive*, I terminate my sacred visit to the tomb of her I have lost by a pious stay of half-an-hour at the church of St. Paul, which is connected with the best recollection of my inner life. I more and more rejoice to have established this irrevocable practice, in which my private and public life are better brought into unison by a weekly commemoration of the special affinities between Positivism and Catholicism. Though Protestantism cannot inspire in the same degree the sentiments of veneration and sympathy, still, as in its own way regulating human life, it also must find a place, in the third rank, in the great religious League which I first conceived after having practised for some months this

fatherly fraternisation with the best of the provisional religions.

The precious volume we expect from Mr. Congreve besides its important Occidental reaction by uniting the two most influential proletariates, must exercise a powerful direct action on Britain by rectifying the groundless opinion which prevails officially amongst your aristocracy and middle classes. They regard England as having escaped beforehand the present Occidental crisis by means of its dynastic revolution of 1688. No special treatise therefore can be more important at present for the social installation of Positivism in the West than one which will establish the true historic filiation between the two great republican explosions of England and of France. . . .

TO THE SAME.

11 St. Paul, 69 (31st May, 1857).

. . . A MAN ought to obtain a mastery over his occupations without ever allowing himself to be absorbed by them. Though men of science have often sought to represent this absorption as a symptom of force, we must rather see in it a sign of weakness. In the normal order every man ought continually to reconcile two different occupations—on the one hand his special labours; on the other hand his just solicitude with respect to the general

economy—by assigning distinct and regular portions of his time to each sort of activity. Social harmony would be as much compromised by the habitual abandonment of great public interests as by chronic neglect of real private duties. If you look specially at the case of the priesthood, you will feel that the priest must hereafter habitually combine several distinct functions, each of which now entirely absorbs an organ ; on the one hand teaching and preaching ; on the other counsel, consecration, and discipline. Prepare yourself, then, for this varied existence, by learning now to pursue your religious meditations and communications in the midst of your medical studies. . . .

TO JOHN METCALF.

3 *Aristotle*, 68 (28th February, 1856).

. . . I WARMLY approve the relations you have been seeking to establish with the Catholics of New York, and the efforts you are making to bring them to the true faith. My recent *Appeal to Conservatives*, which you have probably already read, points out the natural affinity of Catholicism and Positivism, and proposes a religious alliance between them for the reorganisation of the West. Systematising social continuity—as we do—we must aim at deserving to be freely recognised by our predecessors as the true heirs of the medieval Catholics, whose programme we come to realise, regulating human life through feeling, as they did, but with a better doctrine and in a more favourable situation. If even here in Paris, the Catholics, notwithstanding the deterioration produced in them by the false official position they occupy, seem to me better prepared for Positivism than all our other contemporaries, I must have still higher hopes for those of your city, who, placed in the midst of a hostile population, cannot aspire to rule, and are thus disposed to develop directly the moral efficacy of their religion. Though, for that very reason, their conversion would not be so important as that of the

Catholic masses of Southern Europe ; it offers more facility, and would permit an earlier commencement of the sacred league which is to unite Catholics with Positivists against Protestants.

With respect to the instructions as to your action which you ask for, I recommend special contacts with the Jesuits, who are, in all respects, the best organs and defenders of Catholicism. At New York, they must be free from the vices which the hope of domination creates in them at Paris. It is they, amongst the Catholics, who can best appreciate the aptitude of Positivism for the re-construction of the spiritual power, which was attempted in vain by the founders of Jesuitism. In designating them as Ignatians, I recall the fact that our calendar has justly honoured their chief, and I deliver them from a name as faulty in itself as it is associated with general discredit. But your efforts with them, as with all Catholics, must be kept free from any concessions which might sustain or re-animate their habitual disposition to dominate. They can serve only as our auxiliaries, accepting our presidency after having recognised our superiority, especially on the moral side. . . . Any other attitude towards them would only end in sterile contacts, which, wasting your time and your strength, might diminish your zeal by leading to disappointments which may already be easily foreseen.

Imitate in your conduct towards them that which

your eminent friend Mr. Edger adopts in his relations with the opposite camp. . . . Whilst proclaiming with energy the repugnance he justly feels for the dogmas of the anarchists who surround him, he has worthily defended those misguided souls against the interested calumnies of their official opponents. By following this course, my two eminent American disciples will already realise the plan of action described in my *Appeal to Conservatives*, according to which the Positivists are to enter into alliance on the one hand with the retrogrades, and on the other with the revolutionists, while dominating both camps alike. Whilst making clear the extent of our differences from the Catholics, you should always represent them as more to be commended than the Protestants.

The subjective theory of God enables us to conciliate all without concessions to any, by showing that theological beliefs were spontaneous institutions of Humanity for providing, in her childhood, imaginary guides which the predominant species could not find in the real order. Our immediate precursors, the Encyclopedists of the last century, whom their metaphysics kept at the purely individual point of view, and thus rendered incapable of historic feeling, erroneously regarded those theological beliefs as devised by incredulous legislators to assure their own domination. We can now pass from this mistaken system to the just view by substituting the species for the individual, so as to represent the pretended Creator

as really a creation, not of man, but of Humanity, whose institutions can enforce personal submission as decisively as can the external laws of universal destiny. Thus the Positivists honour, according to times and places, first the gods, and then their single successor, as provisional creations of the Great Being. In relation to the last state of Catholicism, they should specially glorify the Virgin as the mystic precursor of Humanity. Her adoration will be easily transformed so as to lead Catholic souls, especially those of women, to the Positivist worship. It is chiefly by directing this transition that the Jesuits, regenerated as Ignatians, will be able to aid us in re-organising the West, provided only that they recognise the normal superiority of the religion founded on the natural existence of the benevolent inclinations, which Catholicism was forced to deny, in order to leave a perfectly clear field for the egoism of its Divinity.

TO THE SAME.

7 Gutenberg, 68 (18th August, 1856).

. . . I REGARD a suitable marriage as the best means of consolidating and developing your moral life. . . . But whilst recommending to you a condition of happiness and improvement to which you appear to me spontaneously inclined, I cannot too seriously

warn you to proceed with great circumspection in the principal event of private life ; gloomy and painful as celibacy is, a bad marriage is much worse.

I am truly pleased to learn that you have already realised the personal institution of private worship, referring it to the maternal type, which must usually be the prevalent one. It is the most decisive sign of a full and solid conversion to Positivism to have thus reorganised the moral life, which has been deplorably neglected since the Middle Ages, especially amongst the Protestant populations ; we must never entirely count on Positivists who have not yet fulfilled this requirement, even when they do not despise it. . . . Your indications as to the precise nature of your professional labours seem to show that you have rightly appreciated their importance. Nevertheless I think I ought here to recall to you the general precepts of Positivism as to the duty incumbent on everyone to perform well his special functions, of whatever kind they may be. It is even important for the general acceptance of our religion that its adherents should always aspire to distinguish themselves in the discharge of their several duties, never neglecting the parts for the whole. . . .

The time is come to realise the wish I formed in 1841 (*Philosophie Positive*, v., p. 327) to confine philosophical and social discussions to Catholics and Positivists, eliminating by common agreement all metaphysicians or negativists (Protestant, Deistic, and

Sceptical) as radically incapable of co-operating in the construction which must distinguish the nineteenth century from the eighteenth. We must now urge all those who believe in God to go back to Catholicism, in the name of reason and morality ; whilst on the same grounds, those who do not believe ought to become Positivists. During the generation which will terminate the Occidental revolution by the spiritual reorganisation, whilst the mass would adhere or return to Catholicism, the specially gifted souls, arriving at Positivism, would lead the movement better. Though we cannot hope that such a clearing-up of the situation will be realised in the British or German medium, we yet ought to make it felt that Protestantism, in all its forms, is unadapted to the age of construction. If, as I hope, France rids herself of the ecclesiastical budget, it will soon be possible to combine Catholics with Positivists against the Negativists of every shade.

TO THE SAME.

9 Homer, 69 (6th February, 1857).

. . . I BELIEVE, as you do, that a worthy marriage is indispensable for you to render your moral culture more determinate, and even to give more steadiness to your social progress, both political and industrial.

But the choice of a real companion calls for great circumspection and consideration. Though I under-

stand and appreciate your growing preference of Catholic women, you ought not to restrict your search to this too limited field. Your own example, that of Mr. Edger, and many others, prove that from Protestantism also, whether Anglican or dissenting, it is possible to rise to Positivism, avoiding any sceptical stage, which henceforth will constitute the principal condition. It must not be supposed that this transformation is reserved exclusively to men. It seems to me that it ought to be specially suitable for women, who must feel an antipathy for the dryness of Protestantism. In whatever medium you make your choice, you alone are competent in this respect. I must only invite you to regard as a *sine qua non* the voluntary participation of your wife in a Positivist marriage, after you have met her wishes for a Catholic or Protestant marriage. . . .

TO THE SAME.

5 Dante, 69 (20th July, 1857).

YOUR letter of 30 Charlemagne, received yesterday, has given me entire satisfaction by your worthy acceptance of the normal career which I have finally recommended to you, as adapted to your whole nature and antecedents—that, namely, of furnishing at the present time the true decisive type of the Positivist proletaire. Combined with the noble resolution

of your eminent friend Mr. Edger to devote himself to the priesthood, this decision may end in furnishing, among the English transplanted to America, the best models of the Occidental regeneration, which, though necessarily rising at Paris, yet could not find there its first complete types, theoretical or practical, in consequence of the too prolonged scepticism which had naturally preceded those early conversions.

You have already understood all the duties which this mission imposes on you in your personal and even domestic life. . . . It is, then, on civic existence only that I must now insist, in order to complete the exposition of all your duties. It presents to you two sorts of obligations—one class special, the other general—which are equally imperative, though seldom reconciled in the working men of our time. Your first civic duty concerns your professional occupations, through which you become, in the Positive religion, a real public functionary, even though others should not look on you as such. The due fulfilment of your daily task, and a uniform noble respect for your industrial chiefs, will supply the best habitual means of making people tacitly recognise the moral and social superiority of Positivism. But all the time which your special functions leave at your disposal must normally be given to the sound appreciation and culture of the largest human relations, in which the systematic providence of the priesthood must always, and particularly now, be assisted by the active spontaneity of

proletaires and the affective influence of women. Before considering the three social aspects under which you ought now to contemplate this general duty, I must first state the prescription which is common to them all.

It consists in combating the two tendencies, equally fatal and profoundly connected, by which the Western proletariat is radically corrupted, especially in France—on the one hand, the disposition to rise above their class ; and on the other the inclination to use the violence of superior numbers to determine the issue of every conflict. The social incorporation of the Western proletariat will never be realised, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the priesthood, till the best of the workingmen shall have irrevocably abandoned every project of deserting their order by passing into the middle class. All the claims of the proletariat must seem merely declamatory, when we know that most of them at present work only because they are forced to do so, without feeling in the least degree the dignity of industrial labour, to which each of them secretly prefers the selfish and idle existence which they censure in the rich. All your Occidental brethren must be taught, as their first lesson, that the notion that all men should live on the interest of capital is as immoral as it is absurd, and that the material existence of the immense majority of citizens must rest altogether on a periodical salary. In the second place, any resort to violence becomes a political

contradiction when men are aspiring to found the final regime of pacific activity; in behaving so, workingmen perpetuate, as far as they can, the military system which must everywhere be extinguished by being transformed. It is true that Positivism sanctions, and even develops by systematising it, the employment of trade unions to raise wages to a proper level, especially at the present time; but it always represents the strike as a last resort, and binds its organisers to respect the free spontaneity of each worker. As to political violence, it is utterly opposed to the true popular cause, and profits only ambitious literary men or bourgeois; because it hinders the formation and development of real public opinion, which, under the guidance of the priesthood, will become the best social resource of the working classes.

Such are the general principles which you should specially apply to the three successive contacts of which your present advantageous situation admits, namely with (1) American, (2) English, and (3) lastly French, proletaires. As to the first, who must be carefully distinguished from all the immigrant Europeans without excepting the best, you must make it your chief object to discover, amongst the *Yankee* population, the true descendants of the worthy co-workers of the great Cromwell, who chose to emigrate by thousands to America rather than to bend under the yoke of British royalty. Notwith-

standing their habitually passive attitude, it is morally impossible that this noble race of men has ever abandoned social aspirations, which are renounced only when they are satisfied. This class has not hitherto actively intervened in American politics except in the war of independence, the success of which was principally due to them, because they felt that the dissolution of a connection with an essentially aristocratic government was at that time indispensable for the radical regeneration which they did not cease to desire. Having afterwards returned to their purely industrial occupations, they await a doctrine systematically capable of realising the spontaneous programme of the Cromwellians. We must accordingly represent Positivism to them as fulfilling all the conditions, practical and religious, of the construction they desire.

Similar dispositions must, for still stronger reasons, exist in the hearts of the English proletariat. Their apparent torpor is founded principally on the just contempt they feel for all the current doctrines, and on their legitimate distrust of the literary class, all whose members are more or less accomplices in the oppression to which they are subjected. But the same disposition is also maintained by the instinctive conviction that it is in Paris, not London, that the doctrine which is to guide the regeneration of the West must be elaborated. The unanimous ardour with which the English working classes hailed the first steps of the French Revolution manifested this

tacit presentiment. It will be sufficient that a voice which they do not suspect, because it proceeds from amongst themselves, should make known to them the actual accomplishment of the great religious construction which Paris alone could establish, and which they must now apply to their own situation by acting in unison with the French proletaires. With regard to these last, your conscientious fraternal remonstrances must be directed to making them feel how far they still are below the regenerative mission which the whole past confers on them the noble task of initiating. It is truly a shame that M. Magnin is hitherto the only French workingman whom Positivism has thoroughly converted, though his old revolutionary habits still often show themselves in the details of civic life. The silent attitude of the English proletaires seems to me infinitely preferable to the noisy empirical agitation of their French brethren, who, if we may judge from the latest official experience, have not made during the last nine years a single decisive step beyond the anarchical metaphysics, and who would be quite ready to second the same aberrations, if we were so unfortunate as to lose before the normal time the salutary dictator who furnishes at present our sole guarantee of public order. . . . Continue, my worthy disciple, to increase in veneration and devotedness.

TO ALEXANDER J. ELLIS.

17 *Archimedes*, 68 (10th April, 1856).

. . . WITH respect to the chief hesitation you still feel as to the Religion of Humanity, I would remind you that hypotheses which are incapable of discussion do not admit of negation any more than of affirmation. We admit them or put them aside according to the wants which they satisfy or cease to satisfy, without affirming or denying them. That is all that Positivism can now grant to the belief of pure Deists. But this apparent concession is reduced to a nullity when we extend it, as we must, to all the truly organic theologisms which deserve it better—monotheistic, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Jewish ; and polytheistic, as the Græco-Roman, Hindu, &c. In all cases a true Positivist will refrain from denying, and will content himself with putting aside these beliefs, not for the time and place corresponding to them, but for the West of our day, which, according to the fundamental law of human evolution, has now, in the persons of its real guides, passed out of the theological state—a state henceforth irreconcilable with the final construction of the universal religion. Amongst the beliefs which preceded it, the only one it can incorporate in itself is Fetishism, modified as

you will see described in the work* on which I am now engaged. Supernatural beliefs, properly so called, admitted only of a transient existence now exhausted; and Monotheism is by its nature less durable than Polytheism, which became extinct in the West when it ceased to be opportune, without anyone's having ever proved the unreality of Minerva, Apollo, Jupiter, &c., who were yet quite as worthy of respect for the corresponding case as your God. . . .

To THE SAME.

12 Archimedes, 69 (6th April, 1857).

MY dear Disciple, . . . The profound appreciation, in your memorable letter, of the Introduction to my recent volume leads me to hope that you will fully utilise the whole of this treatise, the study of which will be specially facilitated by your mathematical habits. . . . You have justly felt that, if my *Philosophy* manifested the theoretic superiority of Positivism, my *Politics* established its social and moral pre-eminence, whilst my *Synthesis* brings out its poetical capabilities. Nothing essential will now be wanting to the universal religion, in order to surmount the grave obstacles of

* The *Synthèse Subjective*.

every kind to be encountered in its final substitution for the local and temporary religions which have spontaneously prepared it. However difficult such a renovation may be, it is the necessary consequence of the law of *the Three States*, which, as a result of my labours during thirty years, all thinkers truly on a level with their age already admit. For the principal application of this law must naturally concern religion, which though, as sentiment, immutable, as conception is profoundly modifiable. Now that all the special elements of the theoretic Encyclopedia have successively become positive, in an order determined by the growing complication of their provinces, it is impossible that the general conception of the different aspects of our life should not be finally subjected to the same regeneration, which would otherwise remain merely preparatory and radically insufficient, if not equivocal or precarious. Now the systematic incorporation of Fetishism in Positivism, whilst Theologism is eliminated, marks the completion of this decisive reconstruction.

In relation to religion, the Positive state consists in directly pursuing, on rational principles, its social destination—namely, the regulation of the whole of human life, public and private—an object which the theological state could never attain except in an empirical and indirect way. The substitution of real laws for imaginary causes becomes truly decisive only in relation to the general system of our existence.

This substitution is a consequence of the comprehensive doctrine now constructed by Positivism, in which all terrestrial affairs are, for the first time, synthetically appreciated, quite apart from pretended celestial affairs. The care of the latter is left to those who, by continued regard to them, become henceforth incapable of taking part in the supreme conduct of human relations, which they abdicate just when the social and rational Religion makes its appearance.

In this great renovation my new volume,* besides its correlation with the preceding ones, fulfils a special office by joining scientific emancipation to the double emancipation, first, from theology, then from metaphysics, now common to all leading minds. . . . Speculative men need, more than practitioners, this final preparation, which I recommend to all true Positivists as henceforth indispensable to their ascendancy in the midst of the Western anarchy. Those in whom the *prestige* of science survives the yoke of theology and metaphysics are not yet fitted to direct the final reorganisation. We must now free ourselves from all three, after having utilised each of these preparatory stages according to its nature and destination. In so far as it is analytic and special, science constitutes only a last *passage* towards the truly Positive state, in which *utility*, which is necessarily synthetic and

*The first volume of the *Synthèse Subjective*, bearing the special title of *Logique Positive*.

subjective, completes *reality*, which is at first objective, and even absolute, so long as it remains particular, as is shown by the inconsequence of contemporary *savants* who, not satisfied with laws, desire to reach causes. All intellects really capable of seconding the decisive installation of Positivism must aim at this full emancipation, because the chief obstacles to our ascendancy will soon emanate from science. Already it cries out against our institutions of perpetual widowhood and of the chaste conjugal preamble, in the name of pretended physiological laws alleged by academic Materialism—a symptom which strikingly shows how important it is that the genius of *ensemble* should dominate the spirit of detail, under pain of perpetuating the religious interregnum, or—what is equivalent—the Occidental revolution. . . .

I thank you for sending me the two extracts* from the unfortunate Shelley, of whom I have formed the same opinion as you, though his poems were hitherto

* The following are the passages from Shelley here referred to :—

I. *Revolt of Islam*, Canto II., Stanza 48.

We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
Yon desert wide and deep, holds no recess
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced,
We might survive all ills in one caress :
Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant heaven : we meet again
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain,
When these dissever'd bones are trodden in the plain.

[II.]

altogether unknown to me. After reading these important passages, I resolved to give their author a place, as adjunct of Byron, in the next reprint of the Positivist Calendar, along with our eminent Elisa Mercœur, kindred to him alike in precocious genius and in misfortune, who died in 1835 at the age of 26. . . .

II. Towards the end of *Prometheus Unbound*.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamant stress ;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

*TO ALFRED SABATIER.**8 Shakspeare, 68 (17th September, 1856).*

. . . IN order to prepare the situation in which Catholicism and Positivism will decisively compete for spiritual ascendancy, eliminating by common agreement Protestantism, Deism, and Scepticism (the three degrees of the modern malady), we must now obtain the entire abolition of the ecclesiastical budget, and force all priests to live, as I do, on the free contributions of their respective adherents, according to the American type, which is alone suitable for the final transition. . . . I have publicly claimed the suppression, not only of the theological budget, but also of the metaphysical and even the scientific, as preliminary condition of the regenerative elaboration. From existing prejudices, it is probable that this triple suppression, which ought to be simultaneous, will, in fact, be successive, and will follow an order inverse to that which I should prefer; it will commence with the religious budget, as being more onerous, and also exciting stronger antipathies. But a worthy initiative in this matter can come only from the Catholic priests themselves, in the absence of which the measure would seem hostile to Catholicism. This is why I desire that the Jesuits should

some forward and support spontaneously the demand which I solemnly proclaimed in the last volume of my principal work [*the Politique Positive*]. . . .

TO THE SAME.

8 *Archimedes*, 69 (2nd April, 1857).

. . . IT is to Religion that the principal application of the Law of the three states must be made, after all the preliminary conceptions have been sufficiently submitted to it. If, as sentiment, Religion is immutable, and has only to be continually developed, as conception, it is subject in its nature to the universal movement which regenerates the whole through its parts. Now, the Positive state consists, for Religion, in tending systematically and directly towards its normal destination, which had previously been only indirectly and spontaneously pursued, namely, the regulation of all human life, private and public.

For this decisive transformation, the philosophy of chimerical causes is irrevocably replaced by that of real laws, which can fully prevail only by directing such a renovation of the universal synthesis. Now that Positivism has adequately fulfilled this final condition, the Occidental situation must more and more promote its necessary ascendancy, by manifesting the social impotence of the provisional religions, which,

being directly devoted to celestial salvation, are radically incapable of seizing the general course of terrestrial affairs, which could not be appreciated before our advent.

Thirty-one years have elapsed since the memorable interviews which followed the decisive Essay* in which I had publicly devoted my life to the foundation, in the West, of the true spiritual power. By the desire of the real chief of the Catholic party (the Abbé Lamennais), I then had with him three free conferences, in which, as worthy adversaries, without any vain hope of mutual conversion, we were naturally led to sketch the outline of the great religious league which has now arrived at full maturity. This characteristic recollection supports me, in spite of individual disappointments, in aspiring to the realisation of this sacred project, in which my fulfilment of the necessary conditions must secure to me a presidency, which the best existing representatives of the old priesthood will be the first to recognize. . .

* Reprinted in Appendix to vol. iv. of the *Politique Positive*.

*TO AN ANONYMOUS ENGLISH
POSITIVIST.*

16 Gutenberg, 69 (28th August, 1857).

. . . IN the normal state, the encyclopedic education having everywhere diffused sound notions on human nature, every invalid who is sufficiently enlightened, if his reason remains unaffected, will be his own best physician, no one but himself having a thorough knowledge of his constitution as a whole. . . .

APPENDIX.

[COMTE was much occupied during the last years of his life in the study of the consensus or harmony of the animal, and especially the human, organism—a subject which would have been fully dealt with in his Treatise on Morals, had he lived long enough to write that work. The following letters, containing an outline of his cerebral theory of disease, were written to M. Audiffrent, and are here brought together to enable readers interested in pathology to survey his doctrine on that subject as a whole.]

TO GEORGES AUDIFFRENT.

14 Frederic, 66 (18th November, 1854).

. . . YOU do wisely in entering on clinical study at Marseilles, at the beginning of your medical course, without attaching exaggerated importance to the subordination of pathology to biology. Existence, and even structure, have been so ill studied, and remain so little known, that you would gain nothing by postponing the direct examination of patients until you possessed fuller statical and dynamical notions on the normal state than those which are now familiar

to you. If no arts, not even mathematical, really admit of complete rationality, that which you are about to learn in a special degree repels such a theoretic illusion. If you compare the medicine of Hippocrates with ours, you will not find the progress of the moderns to correspond with their scientific acquisitions, even after eliminating those that are doubtful or vicious. Nothing can ever dispense with the necessity of guiding medical treatment by a sufficient body of pathological explorations co-ordinated by an unsystematic (*spontanée*) rationality. Besides, clinical studies are eminently fitted to bring to light the *lacunæ* and the imperfections of biology, all the conceptions of that science which do not admit of any medical application being, on that ground alone, idle or vicious. A fully positive appreciation disposes us to sympathise with the practitioners who despise a biological culture which is too often incompatible with the synthetic view of the organism.

You can, therefore, fitly complete your principal medical studies at Marseilles, taking advantage of a locality abounding more in patients than in physicians, without regretting the resources, more apparent than real, which belong specially to Paris. The same motive ought to determine you to pass a year in the school of Montpellier; its more ontological spirit is compensated by a more synthetic character, and it will make you appreciate better the Hippocratic medicine. But you must spend your last year at

Paris, chiefly in order that your degree of Doctor may be obtained from the most accredited centre.

With respect to your great question as to the classification of vegetative diseases, you have judiciously felt that it is still premature. However, I may sketch summarily for you a doctrine which will not directly occupy my thoughts till three years hence.

Language everywhere indicates by a decisive contradiction the general irrationality of pathological conceptions. Though disease is universally defined by contrasting it with health, the first word is habitually used in the plural, whilst the second is always singular. This signifies that the so-called diseases habitually regarded as distinct are really only symptoms. There can at bottom be only one disease, that of not being well. Now, since health consists in unity, disease always results from a disturbance of unity by excess or defect of one of the functions in harmony. The disorder may arise from within or from without, when the normal limits of variation are passed in either direction by the prolonged action, whether of the medium or of the organism. The second case becomes the prevailing one in proportion as the species considered is higher and more civilised.

Amongst the Westerns of our own time, even of the male sex, disease must, then, be habitually attributed to the cerebral centre, which dominates more the whole of the organism, and, besides, is more frequently in action. Affections produced by the influences of

the medium usually derive such gravity as they have from their indirect reaction on the brain through the nerves or the vessels. But we commonly mistake the real seat of *disease*, because the *symptoms* rarely affect the functions of the brain, except in cases of great danger. They almost always consist of effects which the brain-trouble determines in the other organs. You can thus see how far pathology still is from a true rationality, since it is thus forced to regard these different symptoms as so many distinct diseases, so long as it cannot, at least in thought, direct the treatment towards the real seat.

Such a progress cannot be expected until we have sufficiently improved the analysis of the nervous system, which is at present but roughly sketched out on the basis of the distinction, often only confusedly conceived, between the three sorts of nerves—sensitive, motor, and nutritive. With respect to the first in particular, a rational separation must be established between the respective nerves of musculation, calorification, and electrification, hitherto vaguely united under the head of “touch.” Your clinical observations will furnish you with useful lights on this distinction, as delicate as it is important, without which pathological conceptions cannot possess the requisite precision.

What I have said is chiefly intended to prevent your exaggerating, in accordance with a now prevailing tendency, the importance of the classification, still premature, for which you ask me. In it, since

diseases are only symptoms, we must follow the essential order of the corresponding functions. Such is the principle of classification indicated in my last volume, founded on the distinction of the three modes of human existence—vegetative, animal, and cerebral. Carrying out this rule, and considering in detail the corresponding functions, you will arrive at a reasonable classification of vegetative diseases, that is to say, symptoms of cerebral trouble appearing in the life of nutrition. This life is composed of absorption and exhalation, the former consisting in elaboration followed by assimilation, the latter in depuration followed by excretion. As a whole, it has for its centre the circulation, which is equally necessary to these four general functions. To each of these groups of organic acts and agents, apply the consideration of variations by excess and defect beyond the normal limits (still imperfectly known), and you will obtain the required classification of the vegetative symptoms of the failure of cerebral unity, in man and the higher animals, never, of course, leaving out of account the continuous influence of the medium.

TO THE SAME.

9 Bichat, 66 (11th December, 1854).

... I MUST now complete my last letter by adding some further replies to your queries on the systematic theory of disease.

The principle I have laid down enables us to conceive the rational classification of diseases according to their essential sources, since all these reside in the brain. This classification must therefore be derivable from the Cerebral Table.* As the affective region is dominant in the normal state, it must also prevail in the case of disturbances, and so much the more as its action is alone uninterrupted. As to the two other cerebral regions, they can affect only our subdivisions, besides that they participate in producing the symptoms when the trouble attains its maximum. We must, then, refer diseases to Sentiment, of which Intelligence and Activity are only the general ministers, having besides no direct relations with the vegetative life.

We are thus led to divide diseases, in the first place, into egoistic and altruistic, as we do the affective motors. Though both may arise in the way of excess or of defect, the case of excess usually belongs to the egoistic, that of defect to the altruistic. An insufficient development of altruism is the secret source of many perturbations which are radically mistaken. Such are chiefly the epidemics which follow political commotions, like the choleraic affections which, in the present century, followed the anti-Bourbon shock of 1830, the republican crisis of 1848, and, finally, the dictatorial crisis of 1851. The necessarily cerebral

* This is given in the *Positivist Catechism*.

source of every grave malady is specially undeniable with respect to these vast perturbations, which materialistic empiricism pronounces unintelligible.

From this general classification we may, following the same principle, proceed successively to the particular distinctions, following the normal order of the instincts, personal or sympathetic, whose intensity measures that of the perturbations. You will thus be able to develop simultaneously the two essential modes, one rational, the other empirical, of classifying diseases, according as we have in view, on the one hand, their sources ; on the other, their symptoms.

This pathological synthesis leads, in practice, to general consequences which directly connect Medicine with Morals. In fact, diseases resulting from a disturbance of unity, whilst unity depends essentially on sympathy, it is rigorously proved that the best means of preserving health is to develop benevolence. The gaiety and the freedom from anxiety which arise from the habit of *living openly*, in those who *live for others*, guarantee at once their health and their happiness ; a fact in contrast to which we may recall the fine remark of Hufeland on the short life of actors, and in general of persons who are often compelled to assume a character not their own.

Extending the pathological principle beyond our own species, we can explain the less diversity, as well as gravity, of diseases amongst the lower animals, even those most nearly related to us. For, uninfluenced by

a social movement, their brains have less to do, and besides react less on the nutritive viscera.

Such are the new summary indications I add to my former remarks on a capital doctrine which will not fully occupy me until three years hence. I do not regret the efforts in regard to it which your queries have induced me to make.

TO THE SAME.

19 Bichat, 66 (21st December, 1854).

. . . I SEIZE this opportunity to sum up the whole of my two last letters, by insisting on the systematic introduction of the social point of view, as well dynamical as statical, into all medical conceptions, which cannot otherwise become sufficiently real and rational.

Biological thought can remain binary only with respect to the lower animals, in whom it is sufficient to consider simultaneously the organism and the medium. In relation to our own species, this dualism can be used only by decomposing the first element into individual and collective, which renders the fundamental conceptions ternary, in order that physicians may cease degenerating into veterinaries.

"Between the world and man must stand Humanity"; without such a mediator we cannot justly

represent the reciprocal action of the two elements of the great dualism. For it is chiefly through Humanity that the world dominates man, and man modifies the world. Though the universal order affects each of us directly, its real influence on the individual remains preponderatingly indirect by reason of the total weight of the external economy exercised on our predecessors and contemporaries collectively. Compared with such a resultant, the particular component of each person becomes more and more negligible. Besides, Humanity protects man against the world, at the same time that She transmits to him its principal action.

We must henceforth set aside the consideration of man, taken singly, as an abstraction no less vicious in medicine than in politics. Whilst the medical dualism is constituted by the mutual reaction between the body and the brain, the corporeal existence remains necessarily submitted to two continuous influences, one external, the other internal. The first transmits to him the action of the material medium, alone appreciated up to the present; the second that of the social medium, which more and more tends to prevail.

A physician, who had been much struck by my previous communications on the synthetic theory of disease, lately called my attention to the characteristic tendency of the Montpellier school to this theory, at least before its present degeneracy, and when its

point of view was represented by the principal work of Barthez. This spontaneous affinity is the natural compensation for the disadvantages of an ontological doctrine, which nevertheless disposes the student to synthesis, and turns him away from the materialism so injurious to the school of Paris, even in such men as Cabanis and Broussais. But this tendency could not become decisive until two great conditions had been fulfilled by Gall and by myself. First it was necessary that Gall should have placed all the affective functions in the brain, rejecting the idea of their being seated in the vegetative organs, so as to constitute the apparatus through which the dead govern the living. Secondly, the existence and especially the evolution of Society had to be reduced to positive laws, by the foundation of Sociology, without which the spontaneous views of the spiritualists of Montpellier could not have acquired any real consistency, or admitted of a decisive efficacy.

According to the law of interposition, the biological point of view, as being intermediate between the cosmological and the sociological, could not have been systematised without a sufficient institution, not only of cosmology but also of sociology. Thus science and art tend everywhere to fuse themselves finally in Morals, which, as a theory, establishes the knowledge, and, as a practical system, the government of human nature—sole definitive object of our sane speculations.

TO THE SAME.

14 *Moses*, 67 (14th January, 1855).

. . . THE synthetic theory of disease is thus summed up in the sociological definition of the brain as the apparatus by which the dead act on the living. We may thus appreciate as a real malady the existing anarchy of the West, since it chiefly consists in a continued insurrection of the living against the dead, which tends directly to produce a chronic trouble in the cerebral economy. But you can better connect Medicine with Morals by formulating the subjective definition of the brain in this way: *the double permanent placenta between man and Humanity.*

It is important to say *double*, in order always to distinguish the two simultaneous orders of subjective relations, namely, with the past and with the future. This brings out more clearly the gravity of the Western malady, which tends to rupture the placenta in both directions. . . .

TO THE SAME.

21 *Gutenberg*, 67 (2nd September, 1855).

To render more precise your meditations on the muco-dermic envelope, which is the essential seat of

the continuous reaction between the body and the medium, I invite you to consider particularly the sensitive ganglia, and especially that of touch, by means of which the organic life directly affects the cerebral life, and consequently the vital unity. Though its influence is often confounded with that of the ganglia of calorition and of electrition, the examination of diseases enables us to distinguish it, and leads us to regard it as the principal source of the cerebral perturbations due to the muco-derm under the external influence. The body modifies the brain through these three ganglia, as the brain modifies the body through the nerves which emanate from its nutritive organ. But, to conceive aright these general relations, we must set aside the present routine. It was the conforming to this routine that was the principal cause of confusion in the nobly exceptional thesis of M. Foley, who, not having been warned by me in time, persisted in uniting the cerebral apparatus with the whole of the nerves, whilst it, in fact, no more belongs to them than to the muscles. There really exist only three classes of nerves—nutritive, sensitive, and motor, which constitute—if you please to state it so—as many systems, respectively subordinated to the three regions of the brain, which forms neither the termination (*aboutissant*) nor the origin of the nerves of any sort, but is a distinct and superior apparatus, the interior nerves of which are reduced, having no fibrous envelope, to passive bundles (*faisceaux*), by

whose aid its different parts communicate among themselves.

You are quite right in not separating Pathology from Therapeutics, which last all the conceptions of the former must keep directly in view. At bottom, Medicine, like Morals, has always remained rebellious against every idle attempt to separate theory and practice, their provinces being undistinguishable in all that concerns Man, in whose case object and subject coincide, whence it follows that abstraction is reduced to the utmost. It is, in fact, limited to what is necessary for the generality of rules always intended for Man in general, without taking account of individual diversities; these last must finally prevail in application, which can thus never admit of complete rationality. When Medicine shall have become a branch of Moral Science, from which it is normally inseparable, the synthetic character which belongs to them in common will become irresistible, and will make it felt that Humanity is the necessary intermediary between man and the world (or the medium). If we decompose the Great Being into its chronological trinity—the three collective beings, Priority, the Public, and Posterity—we see that the two extremes connect themselves directly with Man by the cerebral placenta, whilst the mean really belongs to the medium, which we must regard as social, no less than vital and material, since those three influences are often analogous or connected, as well in Medicine as in Morals. . . .

*TO THE SAME.**14 Shakspeare, 67 (23rd September, 1855).*

. . . YOUR new question on innervation appears to me not stated clearly enough to enable me to give it a direct reply. I advise you to fix your thoughts on the general dualism between the body and the brain. For this purpose you should regard the body as composed of three parts—viz., one vegetative ; the two others animal, active and passive, namely, the muscles (including the bones), and the senses. These three bodily systems are respectively subordinated to the three cerebral regions. The connection is established by the three nervous *appareils*, nutritive, motor, and sensitive, of which the spinal marrow and the great sympathetic constitute only means of improvement. . . .

*TO THE SAME.**23 Bichat, 67 (25th December, 1855).*

. . . THE composition of my Testament, with which I have been recently occupied, has allowed me to verify in a special case my general conception as to the essentially cerebral source of disease, at least in man, and particularly civilised man. For it produced

in me, like all the preparations of my great labours, a physical crisis, principally related to the digestive apparatus, which has been so much super-excited as to compel abstinence from dinner for thirteen days. From vegetative, the cerebral reaction has to-day become animal, taking the form of a convulsive agitation, which will soon be dissipated, so as to restore my normal state, leaving behind only a lasting stimulation of the speculative region, succeeding to that of the active region, as a result of an influence primarily affective. This represents on a small scale the essential march of our perturbations, so that, as physician, you will be able to utilise the incident, which I therefore take pleasure in describing to you with that object.

TO THE SAME.

24 Homer, 68 (21st February, 1856).

As a result of the whole of my reflections on the supremacy of feeling over intellect, the speculative region of the brain, like the active region, must be finally viewed as merely an appendage of the affective mass (both altruist and egoistic), which essentially constitutes the cerebral organism. The mental apparatus performs, with respect to it, in the elaboration of thoughts, an office analogous to that fulfilled, with relation to itself, by the sensitive ganglia, with the

difference, in the two cases, of general and special, but with the common property of assisting a function, the essential source of which resides elsewhere. . . .

[Dr. Audiffrent has the following Note on the Letter of 9 Bichat, 66 (11th December, 1854):—

“The ideas, generally diffused in our days, of the intervention of microscopic organisms, foreign to the human system, in the manifestation of epidemic diseases, do not at all affect this theory. That such organisms do act in provoking certain diseases and in favouring their extension, so as to give rise to true epidemics, cannot now be called in question. But if these agents did not find the human individual pre-disposed, by the condition of his brain and his body, to receive them, their action would be limited to a slight disturbance, as is shown by the differences of intensity observed in diseases of an epidemic and contagious kind.”]

THE END.

Note.—The entire body of Comte's available letters, now in preparation by his Testamentary Executors, will be comprised in two volumes, one containing those dating from 1824 to 1850, the other those from 1850 to 1857. The former will be chiefly of biographical interest. The latter, which will be first published, will exhibit his latest views on religion, philosophy, and politics. The volumes will be sold separately, the price of each being 10 francs. Subscriptions may be at once sent to the Treasurer of the Executors, M. Antoine Baumann, 3, Rue de Paris, Vanves (Seine).

